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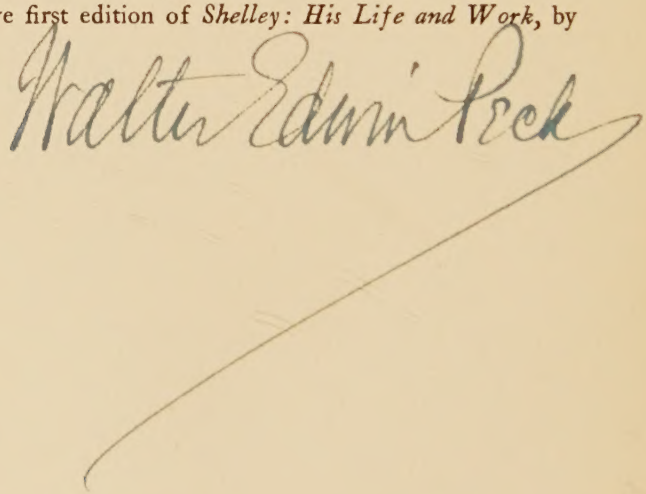

SHELLEY
HIS LIFE AND WORK

Reproduced from the original in the Pierpont Morgan Library

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

"The portrait here on the reverse the autograph inscription 'Geneva Oct. 17th, 1816.' This Miniature was given to me by my poor dear friend Shelley in the presence of Lord Byron. Leigh Hunt."

SHELLEY

His Life and Work

VOLUME I

1792–1817

BY

WALTER EDWIN PECK

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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BOSTON

To

C. E. P.

BUT FOR WHOSE INTEREST IN MY
STUDIES THIS BOOK WOULD NEVER
HAVE BEEN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the preparation of this new study of Shelley's life and work no single person has given so heartily of his counsel, his means, and his time, as has my friend, Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer, of New York City. The resources of his rare collection of Shelleyana have been put entirely at my disposal, and many delightful week-ends among these treasures at his charming country home at Purchase, White Plains, New York, have been the consequence. In this collection, besides the original manuscript of *A Philosophical View of Reform*, are lodged scores of the poet's letters, and those of his second wife, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley; letters of Byron, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Love Peacock, and others of the poet's friends; choice copies, including practically all of the first editions of his works; association books too numerous to mention; together with a host of documents, throwing light on the Shelley estates, before, during, and after Shelley's career; a fragment of Claire Clairmont's Diary of 1814; several leaves from the poet's notebooks; and so much else of value to the Shelley student that to attempt a partial summary would do the rich collection a severe injustice.

For all that he has done to make the study possible, and complete, I can never sufficiently thank him.

Second only to Mr. Pforzheimer in his helpfulness has been Mr. R. B. Haselden, of the Department of Manuscripts, the Henry E. Huntington Memorial Library and Art Gallery, San Gabriel, California. His painstaking collation of the vast collection of Shelley letters now in that great library has been of the greatest assistance not only in the preparation of this

book but also in the task of editing the new Julian Edition of Shelley's complete works.

The choice Shelley manuscripts in the J. Pierpont Morgan Library have, through the courtesy of Mr. Morgan, and his able librarian, Miss Belle da Costa Greene, been put at my disposal. Here rests, within the covers of pearl, the original manuscript, in Shelley's minute and most beautiful hand, of *Julian and Maddalo* (his *Adonais* for Byron and himself); the original manuscript, much stained by waters of the Mediterranean, of the *Indian Serenade;* the beautiful miniature, certified by Leigh Hunt of Shelley as a boy, which by the courtesy of Mr. Morgan, forms the frontispiece of this volume; and many other manuscripts, letters, etc., of the poet and his friends.

By the very great kindness of Mrs. Miriam E. Stark, whose rich collection of Shelleyana has lately been added to the Library of the University of Texas, and of Miss Fannie E. Ratchford, Librarian of the Wrenn Library, I have been enabled to secure the hitherto unpublished letters which Shelley addressed to Count Taaffe, and to collate a number of other published letters and poems.[1]

In addition, I have been aided to no inconsiderable extent, by other American scholars and friends, working in related fields: by Professor Waldo H. Dunn, of the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, who read all the galley proofs, and proffered many valuable suggestions; Professor Chauncey Brewster Tinker, Yale University; Professor Thomas O. Mabbott, Northwestern University; Professor George Mc-

[1] A number of Shelley's letters included in this biography as "hitherto unpublished" have been supplied by the author, who is co-editor of the Julian Edition, for use in that strictly limited issue of Shelley's works. Owing to delays in the publication of this biography, these letters are now in print in the Julian Edition. They have not, however, appeared in any popular-priced edition of Shelley's letters or works and are now, therefore, made available for the first time to the book-buyer of average means.

Lean Harper, Princeton University; Professor Ford K. Brown, St. John's College, Annapolis, Md.; Professor Robert S. Newdick, Harvard University Graduate School; Professor George L. Marsh, University of Chicago; Dr. William C. Lane, Harvard University Librarian; Mr. Walter B. Briggs, Assistant Librarian, Harvard University Library; the Librarian, Buffalo Public Library; Professor Carleton Brown, Swarthmore College; Professor George D. Stout, George Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.; Dean C. C. Todd and Professor Paul P. Kies, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington; Mr. Luther Bowen, The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Mr. Walter Hill, Chicago; Mr. William H. Drake, Mr. Gabriel Wells, Mr. Ernest Dressel North, and Mr. E. Byrne Hackett, New York City; Mr. Max Herzberg, Newark *Evening News*, Newark N. J.; Mr. F. Walter Pollock, Weehawken, N. J.; Mr. W. Clark Durant, The State Hospital Library, Middletown, Connecticut; Dr. Albert H. Leonard, New Rochelle, N. Y.; Thomas H. Watson, Jr., Atty.-at Law, New York City; Professor Erwin R. Goodenough, Yale University; Professor Robert Coffin, Wells College; and many others.

While prosecuting my researches abroad I was indebted for assistance to the late Professor Walter Raleigh, Merton Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford, and the late Thomas Seccombe, Esq., M.A. of the same university; to D. Nichol Smith, Esq., M.A.; Percy Simpson, Esq., M.A.; H. F. B. Brett-Smith, Esq., M.A.; Lawrence F. Powell, Esq., M.A.; and Mrs. Powell (who devoted many weary days to transcribing for me that dreary romance, much admired by Shelley as a youth, *Zofloya, or the Moor*); Dr. A. Cowley, Strickland Gibson, Esq., M.A.; R. H. Hill, Esq., M.A., and Dr. Craster—the last six connected with Oxford's famous libraries—the Bodleian and the Taylorian Institution; Pro-

fessor H. J. C. Grierson, Edinburgh University; Wilfred H. Woolen, Esq., Stratton-on-the-Fosse; Edmund Blunden, Esq., Professor of English literature at the University of Tokio; Alan Porter, Esq., of *The Spectator;* Robert Garnett, Esq., Barrister, 36 Bedford Row, London; Professor A. H. Koszul, the University of Strasburg; Arthur N. Turner, Esq., London; Walter Spencer, Esq., London, (who kindly allowed me to transcribe the Shelley-Brookes correspondence, in his possession); Colin Lunn, Esq., of Oxford; Dr. Thomas Ross, Edinburgh; Archibald G. B. Russell, Esq., Lancaster *Herald* (who secured a copy of the Shelley coat-of-arms for use in this volume) and many others.

Sir John C. E. Shelley-Rolls has graciously permitted the publication of the new Shelley documents included in the present work. For this permission I am very grateful.

To my loyal friends Mr. Edward J. O'Brien and Mrs. Minna O'Brien, whose unfailing interest has so materially aided me to carry these Shelley studies to this temporary point of rest, I should like to be able to render adequate thanks.

And I should like to record my appreciation of the generous help lent me by my friend and coeditor (of the Julian *Shelley*) Mr. Roger Ingpen. Not only as a student of Shelley necessarily indebted to Mr. Ingpen for his informative *Shelley in England* and his three successive able editions of Shelley's *Letters*, but also as a friend who has received many suggestions and favors from him, I must acknowledge the heavy obligation I owe to his scholarship and courtesy.

But, of course, when all this has been said, I turn to one who sews by an ample New England fireplace built for another "amiable consort" in 1747 and wish for words to make the last and greatest acknowledgment. But for that silence is best.

Portland, Connecticut
May 1, 1926.

W. E. P.

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SHELLEY
HIS LIFE AND WORK

CHAPTER I

THE TIMES AND THE CHILD

Field Place—Eccentricities—Imagination

AUGUST 4, 1792. France. The third anniversary of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man.* The news that the National Assembly has decreed the sale of all religious houses is carried to the king and queen, now prisoners in the Temple. Her borders beset by the army of the Continental Coalition, republican France, who had but lately come into her inheritance, hastily summons her untutored armies to withstand invasion. In England, to whom Louis had vainly appealed for the preservation of the *ancien régime*, all is sympathy with the Revolution. Burke, it is true, had cried out, two years before, in protest and alarm; but there had been no rush to his standard.

Instead, the news of each day's republican successes speeds from lip to lip; and having already drawn Wordsworth across the Channel to the company of the Brissotins [1] sets Coleridge forecasting, at Cambridge, "the most splendid plans for the improvement of the world," his "wingèd words pouring in melodious accents" from his "voluptuous lips," [2] and stirs Burns, an exciseman sworn to preserve law and order, to buy the guns of a condemned smuggler and despatch them to the French republicans with expressions of admiration and esteem.[3] Thinking London is stirred by the appearance of *A Vindica-*

[1] Christopher Wordsworth. *Memoirs of Wordsworth.* 1851. I. 73 and cf. *The Prelude,* VI. 399 seq.

[2] Alois Brandl. *Life of Coleridge,* (transl. by Lady Eastlake). 1887. p. 49.

[3] Edward Dowden. *The French Revolution and English Literature.* p. 145.

tion of the Rights of Women, by Mary Wollstonecraft, while a few privileged friends are given the opportunity of perusing in MS. that revolutionary document of moral and political philosophy, *An Enquiry into Political Justice*, by Mary Wollstonecraft's husband-to-be, William Godwin.

Most of the generation of littérateurs whose stars were to blaze with greater brilliance in the dawn of the nineteenth, were at school, or were about to enter it: Byron, at Aberdeen; Peacock, at Englefield Green; Hunt, at Christ Hospital, whence Lamb had proceeded to the South Sea House, not long since; and Southey, at Westminster, speaking out like a true revolutionary, in a paper called *The Flagellant*, against the master's practice of flogging.

But at Field Place House, in Warnham parish, two miles or so to the west of Horsham, Timothy Shelley and his wife Elizabeth were not thinking of these things. In that fine old eighteenth century house, the gift of his father, far other issues concerned all hearts, not less important, perhaps, than any of the foregoing, yet of whose consequences neither Timothy nor Elizabeth could have dreamed. For on that day, and in that house, their first child, a son, was born.

They christened him Percy Bysshe, and his biographer and cousin, Thomas Medwin, has asserted that the first name was given him in honor of "an aunt who was distantly connected with the Northumberland family," [4] and we can be fairly certain that Timothy intended a compliment to his father, Bysshe Shelley, when the second name was bestowed

[4] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* (1847) i. 1. But Mr. Ingpen kindly informs me that one of the two copies of the Newark, N. J., U. S. A. parish register entry of the birth of Shelley's grandfather now among the Shelley family papers gives the name of the latter as Percy Bysshe Shelley. This, if an accurate copy of the original register, would indicate a more likely source of the poet's names.

on his young son.[5] Two years later, a daughter, Elizabeth, was born to Timothy Shelley and his wife. In 1796 a second daughter, Hellen, made her appearance, but died four months later. Mary was born June 9, 1797; Hellen, second of the name, September 26, 1799; Margaret, January 20, 1801; and John, March 15, 1806, three weeks after his grandfather, Bysshe Shelley, attained the rank of baronet. As their mother had been, the children were singularly handsome. Hogg says of the sisters that "all . . . lived to be distinguished for remarkable beauty," and this the portrait of Margaret and Hellen, now in the possession of Sir John Shelley, Bart., well attests.

Percy Bysshe, or "Bysshe" as he was known to all the family, grew up with his sisters, their beloved playmate. John, his only brother, because he did not enter the family until Bysshe was in his second year at Eton, joined but little in the life of the elder lad, and was never in any sense a companion for him. But Hellen has left the record of at least one incident illustrating their rare good times:

> My younger brother, John, was a child in petticoats, when I remember Bysshe playing with him under the fir-trees on the lawn, pushing him gently down to let him rise and beg for a succession of such falls, rolling with laughing glee on the grass; then,—the little carriage was drawn through the garden walks at the rate a big boy could draw a little one, and in an unfortunate turn the carriage was upset, and the occupant tossed into the cabbages, or strawberry-bed.[6]

And Margaret in after years remembered

[5] Though Medwin declares that it was rather out of deference to the family of Roger Bysshe, of Fen Place, with which the poet's great-great grandfather had intermarried.

[6] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. 1858. I. 10.

. . . how Bysshe came home [7] in the midst of the half-year to be nursed; and when he was allowed to leave the house, he came to the dining-room window, and kissed her through the pane of glass. She remembers [8] his face there, with nose and lips pressed against the window, and at that time she must have been about five years old.[9]

The situation of Field Place was favorable for the children. Standing "in well wooded grounds, some distance from the road, in a slight hollow surrounded by trees and . . . approached by a drive from the south" [10] it offered abundant space for games and innumerable opportunities for their quick fancies, which were ever on the alert.

Bysshe was fond of reading and telling stories, and of an evening would hold the other children spell-bound in a close circle about him with wild, extravagant stories of the Great Tortoise of Warnham Pond, the Great Old Snake of Warnham Wood,[11] and the grey-bearded alchemist who, it was alleged, inhabited the garret of Field Place.[12] Sometimes too, his interest in the marvellous and astonishing phases of science drove him flying through the rooms, a small, portable stove, ablaze with inflammable liquid, in his arms; [13] setting fire to the butler, perhaps, in passing; [14] and arousing in general the awe of his less-daring sisters, and the wrath of his unsympathetic parents.

[7] In 1806.

[8] About 1858.

[9] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. i. 11.

[10] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. 1917. p. 22.

[11] Professor Dowden suggests that this giant reptile was the parent of that "brood of amiable serpents with which readers of the poet's verse are familiar." *Life of Shelley*. 1886. i. 10.

[12] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. i. 7–8.

[13] *Ibid.* i. 8.

[14] *Ibid.* i. 332.

Now and then, as Julian after the death of Cloudesley,[15] he would manifest the desire to go alone on long rambles, which alarmed none who were familiar with his precocities; and Laker, the old butler, like Julian's valet would follow him part way, returning to comment: "Master Bysshe only took a walk, and came back." Some of these walks took him to the wood nearby, which for him was filled with mystery and beautiful in form and color; and to the pond where, perhaps, for the first time he indulged in that playful fancy, celebrated by all his biographers, the making and launching of paper boats.

An incident of his boyhood and of his early predilection for romancing is supplied in a narrative which Shelley contributed to *The Indicator*, July 12, 1820. This narrative has been assigned to Charles Lamb by some modern editors, but for the reasons already stated elsewhere,[16] augmented by the parallel between the wording of a part of the story and a passage in Shelley's preface to *The Cenci*, cited in support of my ascription by another contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement*, I firmly believe the story to be Shelley's. Setting, plot, style and the signature Delta are clearly Shelley's, not Lamb's.

A TRUE STORY

(*To the Indicator.*)

Sir,—When I was a young boy, I had delicate health, and was somewhat of a pensive and contemplative turn of mind: it was my delight, in the long summer evenings, to slip away from my noisy and more robust companions, that I might walk in the shade of a venerable wood, my favorite haunt, and listen to the cawing of the old rooks, who seemed as fond of this retreat as I was.

One evening I sat later than usual, though the distant sound of the

[15] Godwin, *Cloudesley*. iii. 174–5.
[16] The *Times Literary Supplement*. November 27, 1924.

cathedral clock had more than once warned me to my home. There was a stillness in all nature that I was unwilling to disturb by the least motion. From this reverie I was suddenly startled by the sight of a tall slender female, who was standing by me, looking sorrowfully and steadily in my face. She was dressed in white, from head to foot, in a fashion that I had never seen before; her garments were unusually long and flowing, and rustled as she glided through the low shrubs near me, as if they were made of the richest silk. My heart beat as if I was dying, and I knew not that I could have stirred from the spot: but she seemed so very mild and beautiful, I did not attempt it. Her pale brown hair was braided round her head, but there were some locks that strayed upon her neck; and altogether, she looked like a lovely picture but not like a living woman. I closed my eyes forcibly with my hands, and when I looked again she had vanished.

I cannot exactly say why I did not on my return speak of this beautiful appearance: nor why, with a strange mixture of hope and fear, I went again and again to the same spot, that I might see her. She always came, and often in the storm and plashing rain, that never seemed to touch or to annoy her, and looked sweetly at me, and silently passed on: and though she was so near to me, that once the wind lifted those light straying locks, and I felt them against my cheek, yet I never could move or speak to her. I fell ill; and when I recovered, my mother closely questioned me of the tall lady, of whom, in the height of my fever, I had so often spoken.

I cannot tell you what a weight was taken from my boyish spirits, when I learned that this was no apparition, but a most lovely woman; not young, though she had kept her young looks, for the grief which had broken her heart seemed to have spared her beauty.

When the rebel troops were retreating after their total defeat, in that very wood I was so fond of, a young officer, unable any longer to endure the anguish of his wounds, sunk from his horse, and laid himself down to die. He was found there by the daughter of Sir Henry R——, and conveyed by a trusty domestic to her father's mansion. Sir Henry was a loyalist: but the officer's desperate condition excited his compassion, and his many wounds spoke a language

a brave man could not misunderstand. Sir Henry's daughter, with many tears, pleaded for him, and promised that he should be carefully and secretly attended. And well she kept that promise: for she waited upon him (her mother being long dead) for many weeks, and anxiously watched for the first opening of eyes, that, languid as he was, looked brightly and gratefully upon his young nurse.

You may fancy, better than I can tell you, as he slowly recovered, all the moments that were spent in reading, and low-voiced singing, and gentle playing on the lute; and how many fresh flowers were brought to one whose wounded limbs would not bear him to gather them for himself; and how calmly the days glided on in the blessedness of returning health, and in that sweet silence so carefully enjoined him. I will pass by this, to speak of one day, which, brighter and pleasanter than others, did not seem more bright or more lovely than the looks of the young maiden, as she gaily spoke of "a little festival which (though it must bear an unworthier name) she meant really to give in honour of her guest's recovery"; "And it is time, lady," said he, "for that guest, so tender and so honoured, to tell you his whole story, and speak to you of one who will help him to thank you: may I ask you, fair lady, to write a little billet for me, which, even in these times of danger, I may find some means to forward?" To his mother, no doubt, she thought, as with light steps and a lighter heart she seated herself by his couch, and smilingly bade him dictate; but, when he said, "My dear wife," and lifted up his eyes to be asked for more, he saw before him a pale statue, that gave him one look of utter despair, and fell, for he had no power to help her, heavily at his feet. Those eyes never truly reflected the pure soul again, or answered by answering looks the fond inquiries of her poor old father. She lived to be as I saw her,—sweet and gentle, and delicate always: but reason returned no more. She visited till the day of her death the spot where she first saw that young soldier, and dressed herself in the very clothes that he said so well became her.

Meanwhile, his education in the sense of ordinary "book learning" was not utterly neglected. Medwin tells us that

Shelley "received the same education as his elder sisters,[17] being instructed in the rudiments of Latin and Greek by Mr. Edwards, the clergyman of Warnham,—a good old man," adds Medwin, "but of very limited intellects [*sic*] and whose preaching might have been edifying if his Welsh pronunciation had made it intelligible." [18] Shelley has left us no record of his impressions of his first mentor, but if that ease in reading the classical languages to which Shelley subsequently attained may be taken as the fruit of the early lessons of the Welsh parson, the latter must have done his work well.

As early as 1800 Shelley wrote and illustrated some stanzas on a tabby-cat, which were probably his earliest composition in verse. The cat receives less attention than Gray's "favorite cat, drowned in a tub of goldfish" in the poem, by this title, which Shelley memorized early. It is

> . . . the modes of distress
> Which torture the tenants of earth
> And the various evils
> Which, like so many devils,
> Attend the poor souls from their birth,

which interest Shelley. Here is expressed that sympathy with suffering humanity—a sympathy born at first I believe in his own ill health and self-pity for his imagined state of persecution, which if not always a major *motif*, is heard as an undertone in almost all of his poetry. The ending of the poem is directed against some one with a censorious or babbling tongue—which, we cannot be certain, for he says only:

> . . . this poor little cat
> Only wanted a rat

[17] Medwin is in error. Shelley's sisters were all younger than he.
[18] Medwin, *Life of Shelley*. i. 13.

To stuff out its own little maw;
And it were as good
Some people had such food,
To make them *hold their jaw!*" [19]

Companionship with his sisters, however delightful, must have played its part in feminizing the boy who was later baited with derisive cries of "Shelley! Shelley!" at Brentford and Eton; companionship which perhaps also set his mind running in those channels of perverse affection which left its traces on *Rosalind and Helen,* and upon *Laon and Cythna,* the earlier and suppressed form of *The Revolt of Islam.* The reading of romances, begun at home, continued through his early school life and into his months at Oxford, leaving *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian,* in its wake. Eighteenth century moralizing, allegorical, and ballad poetry—the latter division of which plundered freely from the highly-exaggerated prose tales of the Gothic romancers, affected the *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire* (1810) and *The Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* (1810), the first "collected editions" of Shelley's verse. A period, altogether, productive of important effects in Shelley's later life; but generally underestimated by his biographers.

At ten, Shelley entered Sion House Academy, Isleworth, near Brentford, his cousin, Tom Medwin, being there before him; and it is mainly to Medwin's narrative of Shelley's experiences at his first public school that the biographers of the poet must forever turn. The principal of the school at this time was the Reverend Dr. Greenlaw, "a hard-hearted Scotchman, and a man of rather liberal opinions," according to *Shelley,* [20] but whom Medwin found "a choleric man of a san-

[19] *Poetical Works.* Oxford Ed. 1904. pp. 933–4.
[20] Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* i. 22.

guinary complexion, in a green old age, not wanting in good qualities, but very capricious in his temper, which, good or bad, was influenced by the daily occurrences of a domestic life not the most harmonious, and of which his face was the barometer, and his hand the index." [21]

The school, according to Sir John Rennie, then one of its pupils, "was a large house, formerly belonging to the Bishop of London. To the house were attached excellent gardens and playground. The situation, moreover, was open and healthy —the total number of boys was about fifty, ranging from eight to sixteen years of age. They were well fed and taken care of by the Doctor's excellent wife; and his sister-in-law, Miss Hodgkins. The Doctor's eldest daughter, Miss Greenlaw, taught the youngest boys their letters; whilst the Doctor and his assistants devoted themselves to the education of the others, which education consisted chiefly of classics, writing, arithmetic, French, and occasionally geography and the elements of astronomy."

"During the time that I was there," avers Rennie, "the most remarkable scholar was the celebrated poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, who—even at that early age—exhibited considerable poetic talent, accompanied by a violent and extremely excitable temper, which manifested itself in all kinds of eccentricities.—The least circumstance that thwarted him produced the most violent paroxysms of rage; and when irritated by other boys—he would take up anything, or even any little boy near him, to throw at his tormentors." Nor was Shelley beyond perpetrating other rude pranks; for, according to Rennie, "he not infrequently astonished his schoolfellows by blowing up the boundary palings of the playground with gunpowder, also the lid of his desk in the midst of school time, to the great surprise

[21] Medwin, *Revised Life of Shelley.* p. 19.

of Dr. Greenlaw himself and the whole school. In fact, at times he was considered to be almost upon the borders of insanity; yet with all this, when treated with kindness, he was very amiable, noble, high-spirited, and generous." [22]

Rennie has also left it on record that at the time of Shelley's residence at Sion House there was in the school "another peculiar character, named Tredcroft, from the same county"; and Professor Dowden has conjectured that this other son of Sussex may have been the original of that schoolboy friend whom Shelley has described in his fragmentary *Essay on Friendship*:

I once had a friend whom an inextricable multitude of circumstances has forced me to treat with apparent neglect. To him I dedicate this essay. If he finds my own words condemn me, will he not forgive?

The nature of love and friendship is very little understood, and the distinctions between them ill-established. This latter feeling—at least, a profound and sentimental attachment to one of the same sex, often precedes the former. It is not right to say, merely, that friendship is exempt from the smallest alloy of sensuality. It rejects with disdain, all thoughts but those of an exalted and imaginative character. I remember forming an attachment of this kind at school. I cannot recall to my memory the precise epoch at which this took place; but I imagine it must have been at the age of eleven or twelve.

The object of these sentiments was a boy about my own age, of a character eminently generous, brave, and gentle; and the elements of human feeling seemed to have been, from his birth, genially compounded within him. There was a delicacy and a simplicity in his manners, inexpressibly attractive. It has never been my fortune to meet with him since my schoolboy days; but either I confound my present recollections with the delusions of past feelings, or he is now a source of honour and utility to everyone around him. The tones

[22] Rennie. *Autobiography.* 1875. pp. 1–2.

of his voice were so soft and winning, that every word pierced into my heart; and their pathos was so deep, that in listening to him the tears have involuntarily gushed from my eyes. Such was the being for whom I first experienced the sacred sentiments of friendship. I remember in my simplicity writing to my mother a long account of his admirable qualities and my own devoted attachment. . . . I remember we used to walk the whole play-hours up and down by some moss-covered palings, pouring out our hearts in youthful talk. We used to speak of the ladies, with whom we were in love, and I remember that our usual practice was to confirm each other in the everlasting fidelity, in which we had bound ourselves toward them, and toward each other. I recollect thinking my friend exquisitely beautiful. Every night, when we parted to go to bed, we kissed each other like children, as we still were! [23]

I have quoted this fragmentary essay at length not merely for the information it conveys to us directly, but for the insight it affords into a certain unmasculine softness and emotionality already highly developed in the boy Shelley and which has left its traces not only in the acts, but also in the literary works of the poet. Elizabeth Shelley, Harriet Grove, Harriet Westbrook, Felicia Hemans, Mary Godwin, Claire Clairmont, Cornelia Turner, Mrs. Boinville, Sophia Stacey, Lady Mountcashell, Maria Gisborne, Emilia Viviani—the gallery of the feminine "sisters of his soul" is extensive and significant. Consider, too, the important place given to women or female spirits in the poems—Queen Mab, Cythna, Rosalind, Helen, Beatrice, Asia, Panthea, Urania, the witch of Atlas—the list grows under one's hand. "The tones of his voice"—Shelley is speaking of the boyhood friend—"were so soft and winning, that every word pierced into my heart; and their pathos was so deep, that in listening to him the tears have involuntarily

[23] Hogg. *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 23–4.

gushed from my eyes." If this is a normal state for a boy's nerves at the age of, say, twelve or fifteen years, we have much yet to learn of the species. But after reading that this was the state of Shelley's nerves at the period, we are not startled to encounter records of such scenes in his verse.[24] Were it not for the certainty that this predisposition to the lachrymose was indeed part and parcel of Shelley's own spiritual nature, we might believe he had borrowed some touches of it from "blue books" [24a] of the period. In one of these which on evidence external and internal we know Shelley read with delight—*Zofloya, or the Moor*, by Charlotte Dacre, we encounter such passages as:

. . . his violent feelings sought relief in an irrepressible gush of tears. (*Zofloya*, i. 242.) . . . he cast himself at the feet of Zappi, unable to restrain his tears. (i. 255.) Tears involuntarily filled his eyes, and coursed each other down his cheeks; he closed his eyes, filled as they were with tears, and ruminated over the sorrows of his youth. (ii. 13.) . . . tears trembled in his eyes. (ii. 28.)

This type of lad is likely to be lonely among hale and hearty, fun-and-mischief-loving, athletic boys to whom in America, at least, a cry of "scra-a-ap!" from a far corner of the playground has more of melody in it than the music of the spheres. He cannot understand them, nor they him. In their eyes he appears a tempting target; and, nothing loath, they are likely to set upon him, a pack of young wolves in full cry, belaboring him with tongues, fists, or sticks as occasion and their natures may dictate. In any case life at the school is pretty certain to

[24] Cf. Ellis. *Lexical Concordance to the Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. (1892). ref. "tears," pp. 697–8; and "weep," pp. 779–80.

[24a] So called from the fact that they were issued in two, three, or four volumes, in gray-blue paperboards.

become for him, as Medwin says Sion House became for Shelley, "a perfect hell."

In a much-quoted passage from the Dedication to *Laon and Cythna*, the boy who spent his school hours in composing verses or drawing landscapes and his recesses in "pacing, with rapid strides, a favorite and remote spot of the playground—generally alone" [25] has written down the history of an early spiritual crisis in his life. Probably it was at Sion House, not Eton, that one day

> . . . there rose
> From the near schoolroom voices that, alas!
> Were but an echo from a world of woes—
> The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.
> And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
> —But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
> Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—
> So, without shame, I spake:—"I will be wise,
> And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
> Such power, for I grow weary to behold
> The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
> Without reproach or check." I then controuled
> My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.[26]

By one of his schoolmates [27] Shelley is described as appearing "like a girl in boy's clothes, fighting with open hands, and rolling on the floor when flogged, not from the pain, but 'from

[25] Medwin, *Shelley Papers*. 1833. p. 4.

[26] Dedication to *Laon and Cynthia*. ll. 24–36. And cf. *Julian and Maddalo*. 379–382:

> I am prepared—in truth with no proud joy—
> To do or suffer aught, as when a boy
> I did devote to justice and to love
> My nature, worthless now.

[27] Mr. W. C. Gellibrand, whose recollections were published by Mr. Augustine Birrell in the *Athenæum*, May 3, 1884, p. 567.

a sense of indignity.'" Rennie confirms Gellibrand: "His figure was of the middle size, although slight, but well made. His head was well proportioned, and covered with a profusion of brown locks; his features regular, but rather small; his eyes hazel, restless, and brilliant; his complexion was fair and transparent, and his countenance rather effeminate, but exceedingly animated." [28] The miniature of Shelley as a boy, painted by the Duc de Montpensier, and now in the possession of Sir John Shelley at Avington lends whatever support these descriptions may be thought to need.

Yet these days, for the boy who was so "different" in ability, appearance, and aptitude, from his fellows, were not utterly unrelieved by oases of happiness. In the only extant letter written by Shelley before 1809, we can catch a glimpse of one day of picnicking merriment. It was written to an aunt of Thomas Medwin, and reads:

Monday, July 18, 1803.

Dear Kate,

We have proposed a day at the pond next Wednesday; and if you will come tomorrow morning, I would be much obliged to you; and, if you could any how bring Tom over to stay all the night, I would thank you. We are to have a cold dinner over at the pond, and come home to eat a bit of roast chicken and peas at about nine o'clock. Mama depends upon your bringing Tom over tomorrow, and, if you don't, we shall be very much disappointed. Tell the bearer not to forget to bring me a fairing,—which is some ginger-bread, sweetmeat, huntingnuts, and a pocket-book. Now I end.

I am not
Your obedient servant,
P. B. Shelley.

(addressed outside)

[28] *Autobiography.* p. 2.

Miss Kate,
Horsham, Sussex.
Free P. B. Shelley.[29]

It is a remarkably dignified letter for a lad of eleven, and perhaps a trifle cold from the forging; but there are phrases through which escape the fun of that children's holiday and Shelley's real pleasure in society congenial to him. The jesting subscription: "I am *not* your obedient servant," and the playful trick of the boy's frank at the end effectively negative a suspicion one might entertain from the preceding, that Shelley was quite devoid of a sense of humor. Undoubtedly, he never displayed it to excess; but no one who has read Hogg's biography, and Shelley's own *Peter Bell the Third* and *Epistle to Maria Gisborne*—to mention no other sources of evidence—could agree with Matthew Arnold that "the disastrous want and weakness of Shelley" was "his utter deficiency in humor." [30] The American humorist, Mark Twain, has suggested, facetiously, apropos of Arnold's assertion, and with reference to a later event in Shelley's life, that William Godwin

> . . . was opposed to marriage. He was not aware that his preachings from this text were but theory and wind; he supposed he was in earnest in imploring people to live together without marrying, until Shelley furnished him a working model of his scheme and a practical example to analyze, by applying the principle in his own (Godwin's) family; the matter took a different and surprising aspect then. . . . This episode must have escaped Mr. Arnold's attention.[31]

[29] *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ed. Roger Ingpen. (1915) i. 1–2.

[30] *Essays in Criticism.* 2nd Series. For a further discussion of this point see W. T. Young, art. on *Humour in the Poets and Parodists of the Romantic Period,* in *Primitiæ, Univ. of Liverpool Publications,* 1912, pp. 242–5.

[31] "In Defense of Harriet Shelley," in *In Defense of Harriet Shelley and Other Essays.* (ed. 1918) p. 48.

Another source of pleasure for Shelley lay in the publications of Lane's *Minerva Press*, and other thrillers "bound in blue paper wrappers and known to wondering boyhood as 'blue books.'" The action of these tales was swift, the characterization bold, elemental, often overdrawn; and their style florid and sentimental. Their effect upon Shelley was two-fold. They stored his mind with images, plot material, and philosophy which were to emerge later in his own works and which played an important part in stimulating his desire for original writing.

His cousin relates how, when Shelley had "supped full with horrors" of this order, he would often suffer from "strange, and sometimes frightful dreams," and from "apparitions which bore all the semblance of reality." On one occasion, Medwin's timely intervention saved Shelley, temporarily in a state of somnambulism, from precipitating himself from his cousin's bedroom window to the ground, some distance below. Shelley was "excessively agitated" on being awakened. "No man," comments Mary Shelley, in a note on a fragmentary essay of Shelley's dealing with dreams, "had such keen sensations as Shelley. His nervous temperament was wound up by the delicacy of his health to an intense degree of sensibility, and while his active mind pondered for ever upon, and drew conclusions from his sensations, his reveries increased their vivacity, till they mingled with, and were one with thought, and both became absorbing and tumultuous, even to physical pain." [32] Nearly two decades later, Edward Williams, companion of Shelley and Byron in Italy, wrote in his *Journal* under date of Sunday, June 23, 1822: "S [helley] sees spirits, and alarms the whole house." [33] Between his dreams, his hallucinations, and his gift for weaving fantastic fictions of his

[32] *Essays, Letters from Abroad, etc.* i. 251.
[33] *Journal of Edward Ellerker Williams.* 1902. p.67.

actual experiences, Shelley is a baffling subject for any biographer desirous of recording nothing but the facts.

"His imagination," wrote Rennie of Shelley, "was always roving upon something romantic and extraordinary, such as spirits, fairies, fighting, volcanoes, etc." [34] An instance of this youthful disposition of Shelley's is furnished by his sister Hellen, who recounts how "On one occasion he gave most minute details of a visit he had paid to some ladies, with whom he was acquainted at our village; he described their reception of him, their occupations, and the wandering in their pretty garden, where there was a well-remembered filbert walk and an undulating turf-bank, the delight of our morning visit." [35] Yet it was ascertained almost immediately that Shelley had not made the visit he had described with such detail. Peacock, after relating a similar fabrication of Shelley's, declares it as his belief that Shelley would have been less inclined to romancing had some of his stories been met with the cold eye of disbelief; "but they were encouraged by the ready credulity with which they were received by many who ought to have known better." [36]

Throughout his life, this mythopeic instinct in Shelley was repeatedly reasserting itself; and many of his unsupported statements are subject, therefore, to discount. Mr. Symons has said: "What Blake *saw* was what Shelley wanted to see." [37] But I am disposed to believe that as a general rule Shelley *succeeded* in seeing what he wanted to see—and, be it added—often at no slight cost to his own happiness. On the other hand, the knowledge which his friends had of Shelley's faculty and infirmity, often caused them to reject genuine

[34] *Autobiography*, p. 2.
[35] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. i. 13.
[36] *Memoirs of Shelley* in *Works*. 1875. iii. 425.
[37] *Romantic Movement in English Poetry*. 1909. p. 270.

truths from his lips as fictions. A case in point is the general repudiation of his story, fortified though it was by the clear statements of Harriet, of the night attack made upon him in Wales in 1813, of which a further account will be found in the eighth chapter.

One outlet, at least, for his vigorous imagination, was offered by the curriculum at Sion House, and this was through the channel of science. In response to the invitation of Dr. Greenlaw, there came to Sion House, in the second or third year of Shelley's residence, that curious compound of genius and quackery, Adam Walker, native of Windermere, inventor of "the patent empyreal air-stove, the patent celestina harpsichord, and the eiduranion or transparent orrery." The lectures of old Walker opened new worlds, wholly unexplored, to Shelley's eager spirit, and awakened aspirations for such a rapid development of science as only the amazing advances made in this field in the nineteenth century could have realized. But ultimately Shelley came to see that this progress could not be made without travail; that the millennium could not be reached by an easy road.[38]

In conclusion, we have observed how the boy brought up among girls had his first brush with brute boyhood, a clash which made him, a solitary though he had been before, now more than ever a confirmed one; and turned his inquiring mind toward the lore of astronomy and botany and the creation not merely of a "Hell of his own," but an Earth conceived in his imagination and directed by his intellect—a world in which to *will* was to *achieve*. The impressions of the school, which Medwin and Shelley carried away with them, were most unfavorable. "So much did we mutually hate Sion House,"

[38] *Philosophical View of Reform.* 1820. p. 11.

wrote Medwin, "that we never alluded to it in after life;" [39] and no doubt, so far as Shelley's conversations with him were concerned, he spoke truth. But Hogg recounts how Shelley, as he was walking one day with him from London to Bishopsgate, pointed out to him "more than once, a gloomy brick house," [40] the old academy at Isleworth, and spoke not unkindly of its master, from whose discipline he had withdrawn in 1804 to Eton.

[39] Medwin, *Life of Shelley*. i. 41.
[40] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. i. 22.

CHAPTER II

THE SECOND DEGREE—ETON

The Eton System—Shelley's Reading—Recreations

ENTERED on the books of Dr. Goodall, headmaster of Eton, on the 29th of July 1804, Shelley first took lodgings at the house of Mr. Hexter, the writing-master. Subsequently he was transferred to the home of the "kind and good humoured," but "dullest man in Eton," George Bethell. This residence "stood just behind the lime-trees which face the railing—in front of the new schools." [1]

The practical knowledge conveyed by the Eton curriculum in Shelley's day cannot have been extensive. Maxwell Lyte calls the mental bill of fare "meagre"; the Reverend John Walker, author of *Etoniana* declares it comprised "little more than Homer, Horace, and Virgil"; while the Reverend C. Allix Wilkinson waxes eloquent on the intellectual deficiencies of the school. In his *Reminiscences of Eton (Keate's Time)* he states that prior to 1834 there had been practically no change in the Eton system for a century; and records sorrowfully "—I think it—simply disgraceful that, in return for all that was paid for us, and after many years of the curriculum at that time, we should—or might, as some did—come away without writing a respectable hand; without any knowledge of the etymology of our language, or, in simpler terms, without being able to spell; without knowing how to do a rule-of-three sum; without any acquaintance with common geography not only of the world, but not even of Great Britain, scarcely perhaps of England; without knowing whether the

[1] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 22.

sun went round the earth, or the earth round the sun, or whether the moon was or was not 'made of green cheese'; without any knowledge of history except the stories they learnt at home in the nursery"; that though Eton graduates "would perhaps astonish many by rattling off verses in Latin and Greek, and by saying hundreds of lines every week from the poets of both the classical languages," they "yet had no idea of English grammar, and could not write an essay or even a letter in their own language," and "upon the introduction of competition for the different professions, had need to go to crammers—in order to be coached in all those things common and necessary for the education of a gentleman." [2]

To Shelley, insatiate for knowledge, such a state of affairs must have come with something of a shock. Medwin relates how, when Shelley had secured a book on chemistry from the library of Medwin *père*, the book "fell into the hands of his [Shelley's] tutor and was sent back through Sir Timothy Shelley, who informed its owner: 'I have returned the book on chemistry, as it is a forbidden thing at Eton!'" [3] It is curious to consider that, a generation later, the poems of the boy who was forbidden to read the textbook on chemistry were likewise blacklisted at Eton, so that Swinburne was forbidden to read *them*.

But conduct his experiments in science Shelley did, despite the prohibitions of tutors. On one occasion, as he stood like some necromancer of the middle ages at a table in his room, enveloped in blue flame, he was surprised by the entrance of "big, blustering Bethell." "I am raising the devil," Shelley explained quietly, to Bethell's query; and the next moment, by way of confirmation, the tutor received an electrical shock from

[2] pp. 3–4.
[3] *Life of Shelley.* i. 45.

a Leyden jar on which he chanced to lay an unwary hand. The experiments of the young scientist from Sussex were, it is true, invariably of the sensational, quick-and-astonishing-result order; to the longer labors of genuine research he seems never to have been drawn. Setting fire to a willow-tree by the use of gun-powder and burning-glass; brewing strange, fiery liquids; invoking departed spirits; despatching fire-balloons—only such essays in the field of science appealed to him.

But though his experiments were discouraged by the faculty of Eton, Shelley found at least one sympathetic heart in the town, who gave him every encouragement. This was Dr. James Lind, "in early life surgeon to an East Indiaman;—a wanderer in strange lands" who had a "love of Eastern wonders" and a liking for "tricks, conundrums, and queer things"—one who was "a better conjurer than a physician." [4] Lind had been for many years physician to the royal family at Windsor; he is mentioned in Madame D'Arblay's *Diary* for 1785, and in her *Memoir* of her father, Dr. Burney. The latter described him as "lean as a lath"; but Shelley has drawn a more detailed and complimentary portrait of his friend. "This man," he told Mary, "is exactly what an old man ought to be. Free, calm-spirited, full of benevolence, and even of youthful ardour; his eye seemed to burn with supernatural spirit beneath his brow, shaded by his venerable white locks; he was tall, vigorous, and healthy in his body; tempered, as it had always been, by his amiable mind."

His debt to Dr. Lind, Shelley recalled with fervour: "I owe to that man far, ah! far more than I owe to my father; he loved me, and I shall never forget our long talks, where he breathed the spirit of the kindest tolerance and the purest wisdom. Once, when I was very ill during the holidays, as I

[4] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 32.

was recovering from a fever which had attacked my brain, a servant overheard my father consult about sending me to a private madhouse. I was a favorite among all our servants, so this fellow came and told me as I lay sick in bed. My horror was beyond words, and I might soon have been mad indeed, if they had proceeded in their iniquitous plan. I had one hope. I was master of three pounds in money, and, with the servants' help, I contrived to send an express to Dr. Lind. He came, and I shall never forget his manner on that occasion. His profession gave him authority; his love for me ardour. He dared my father to execute his purpose, and his menace had the desired effect."[5] This "liberation" from the "tyranny" of his father made an enduring impression on Shelley; for, as late as 1816 we find him retailing the story to Dr. Polidori, who includes a slightly different account of the incident in his *Diary*.[6]

Although Shelley's health at Eton was none of the best, he read, "in the intervals of comparative health—romances, and those the most marvellous ones, unremittingly, and pored over the reveries of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus, the former of which [was] read in Latin, and probably gained more knowledge of that language from that source, than from all the discipline of Eton."[7] "Ancient books of Chemistry and Magic were pursued with an enthusiasm of wonder, almost amounting to belief." Remembering that Dr. Lind's travels had awakened in him an interest in Oriental lore—Lind had gathered a fine collection of Indian and other Eastern curiosities—we may, I think, regard it as not unlikely that

[5] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 31–2.

[6] *Diary of Dr. John William Polidori*. ed. W. M. Rossetti. 1911. pp. 112–13.

[7] Letter to Godwin from Nantgwillt, June 3, 1812. Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 110–11.

From a contemporary lithograph (colored)

ETON COLLEGE

Shelley first encountered the poetical works of Sir William Jones, and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* in the library of the royal physician at Windsor. Of the influence of these works upon *Queen Mab*, some notice will be taken hereafter.

Medwin, publishing some samples of Shelley's essays in Latin versification, done at this period, asserts that his cousin while at Eton translated "in his leisure hours, several books of Pliny the Elder,—whose chapter *De Deo* was the first germ of his ideas respecting the nature of God.[8] Shelley had intended to make a complete version of Pliny's *Natural History*, but stopped short at the chapter on Astronomy, which Dr. Lind, whom he consulted, told him the best scholars could not understand."[9] The MS. of this juvenile performance—like many other MSS. of this and later periods of Shelley's work—appears to have been lost.

From Dr. Lind Shelley borrowed a set of that philosophical treatise, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, by William Godwin, a work which was to have a more profound influence on Shelley's life and work than any other book he ever read. "It is now a period of more than two years since first I saw your inestimable book," he wrote Godwin, in 1812: "it opened to my mind fresh and more extensive views; it materially influenced my character, and I rose from its perusal a wiser and better man. I was no longer the votary of romance; till then I had existed in an ideal world—now I found that in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of reason; I beheld, in short, that I had duties to perform. Conceive the effect which the 'Political Justice' would have upon

[8] Letter to Godwin from Keswick, Jan. 10, 1812. Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, ii. 54.

[9] *Life of Shelley*, i. 49–50.

a mind before jealous of its independence, participating somewhat singularly in a peculiar sensibility." [10]

Not all of Shelley's time, however, was taken up with study, scientific experiments, and metaphysical disputation. In the Montem procession of 1805 he was pole-bearer, wearing the uniform of a midshipman, with blue jacket, white trousers, silk stockings, and pumps. In that of 1806 he was full-corporal in sash and gorget, proceeding, under guard of his pole-bearers clad in blue and white, to Salt Hill. In boating, which he had already enjoyed at Brentford, he spent many hours at Eton. "The scenery down the river," wrote a later Etonian, "is such as probably few who have not seen it are aware of. They rush over the hills and far away, and even across the seas, to find, at great trouble and expense, what lies, it may be said, under their noses—along the towing-path of the Thames." [11]

At other times the love, always deep in his nature, of long walks 'cross-country sped his feet, alone or with some friend, through the lovely countryside about Eton. "Once on a frosty day," wrote Lionel (Mary Shelley) in *The Last Man*, "pushed on by restless unsatisfying reflections, I sought a favorite haunt, a little wood not far distant from Salt Hill. A bubbling spring prattles over stones on one side, and a plantation of a few elms and beeches, hardly deserve, and yet continue the name of wood. This spot had for me peculiar charms. It had been a favorite resort of Adrian [Shelley]; it was secluded; and he often said that in boyhood, his happiest hours were spent here; . . . . he sat on the rough hewn steps that led to the spring, now reading a favorite book, now

[10] Letter to Godwin from Keswick, Jan. 10, 1812. Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 55.

[11] The Reverend C. Allix Wilkinson, *Reminiscences of Eton (Keate's Time)*. 1888. pp. 261–2.

musing, with speculation beyond his years, on the still unravelled skein of morals or metaphysics." [12]

"Many a long and happy walk have I had with him," declared Walter Halliday, "in the beautiful neighborhood of dear old Eton. We used to wander for hours about Clewer, Frogmore, the Park at Windsor, the Terrace; and I was a delighted and willing listener to his marvellous stories of fairy-land, and apparitions, and spirits, and haunted ground; and his speculations were then—of the world beyond the grave. Another of his favorite rambles was Stoke Park, and the picturesque churchyard, where Gray is said to have written his Elegy, of which he [Shelley] was very fond. I was myself far too young to form an estimate of character, but I loved Shelley for his kindliness and affectionate ways; he was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastime at Eton." [13]

Yet into this "rough and boisterous pastime" Shelley was sometimes dragged, to issue with whole skin, but defeated in the conflict with the sturdier boys. Captain Gronow, his schoolfellow, has left an account of a fight between (Sir) Thomas Styles and Shelley, precipitated by a challenge from Styles. The battle was staged in the playing-fields, shortly after noon. The tall, lank figure of the poet towered above the diminutive, thick-set little Baronet, by nearly a head and shoulders. "The first round was a draw, no mischief having been done to either party. In round two the baronet drove home the first blow, but in a moment Shelley bowled him over, and time was called. Before the third round Shelley, who had previously declined to rest between rounds, "stalked round the ring—and spouted one of the defiant addresses usual with Homer's heroes when about to commence a single combat."

[12] *The Last Man,* by the Author of *Frankenstein.* 1826. ii. 322.
[13] Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* i. 43.

Round three was fatal to Shelley's fortunes. In rapid succession, his adversary landed a number of lighter blows, and after these one so severe that the redoubtable scion of the house of Shelley broke precipitately through the ring, "and took to his heels with a speed that defied pursuit." [14]

Stories of his buying a large brass cannon at a Windsor auction, and harnessing up a number of lower boys to draw it down to Eton,[15] and of building a miniature steam engine which burst, to the imminent danger of the Bethell family [16] —to mention no more of his pranks at Eton—cause one to wonder that Shelley did not suffer more severely from that past-master at "birching" [17], Dr. Keate; and that his statement to Godwin [18] that he was "twice expelled" from Eton was not truth, instead of Shelleyan fiction. The various disturbing depredations of the young Shelley at Brentford and Eton are to be borne in mind in estimating the type of problem presented to the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford, when at the end of the long vacation in 1810, he came to them for such tutorial instruction and moral guidance as the University afforded.

[14] *Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow.* ed. 1900. ii. 79–80.

[15] Lord Monson. art. on *Reminiscences of Eton* in *Nineteenth Century,* April, 1909.

[16] *Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow.* ed. 1900. ii. 80.

[17] On one occasion, in 1832, Keate "broke the back" of a school-boy rebellion by flogging, in rapid succession, no less than eighty boys.

[18] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 56.

CHAPTER III

BOYHOOD ROMANCE

Harriet Grove—Launching into Authorship—Influences on Shelley's Work

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had rased their love—which could not be
But by dissevering their nativity.
And so they grew together like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
Shake with decay.

—*Fiordispina* (c. 1820) 11–19.

THIS description, although owing much to certain lines in Thomas Love Peacock's *Rhododaphne, or The Thessalian Spell*,[1] is generally held by Shelley's biographers to refer to his youthful attachment to his cousin, Harriet Grove, whom he probably met for the first time in 1808.[2] Harriet's father, Thomas Grove of Ferne House, Donhead, Wiltshire, had married, in 1781, Charlotte Pilfold, sister of Elizabeth, the mother of Percy Bysshe. In addition

[1] Cf. Peacock, *Rhododaphne*. 1818.

We grew together, like twin flowers,
Whose opening buds the same dews cherish;
And one is reft, ere noon-tide hours,
Violently; one remains, to perish
By slow decay.

[2] Cf. *Melody to a Scene of Former Times* (published 1810, in *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson*):

Two years of speechless bliss are gone.

to his Wiltshire property he was also proprietor of Cwm Elan, a ten thousand acre estate in Radnorshire, South Wales.

"After so long an interval," thus Medwin began his panegyric, in 1847, "I still remember Miss Harriet Grove, and when I call to mind all the women I have ever seen, I know of none that surpassed, or that could compete with her. She was like one of Shakespeare's women—like some Madonna of Raphael." [3] Shelley's passion for Harriet, which was at high tide in the summer of 1810, is thus described by her brother, Charles Grove: "Bysshe was at that time [1810] more attached to my sister Harriet than I can express, and I recollect well the moonlight walks we four had at Strode, and also at St. Irving's,—then the Duke of Norfolk's, at Horsham." [4]

Simultaneously with this first venture in romance, Shelley was launching into authorship. Some time during 1810, probably from April to September, in collaboration with his sister, Elizabeth, he evolved a quantity of juvenile verse imitative of Scott, whose early poems he greatly admired, and more than merely imitative of M. G. ("Monk") Lewis whose *Tales of Terror,* on the library shelves at Field Place,[5] had fascinated the children. The verses by brother and sister were printed by C. and W. Phillips, of Worthing; and in September, were published through J. J. Stockdale, remainder bookseller, 41 Pall Mall, London.[6]

[3] *Life of Shelley.* i. 67.

[4] Letter of Charles H. Grove to Hellen Shelley, from Torquay, Feb. 16, 1857. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 550–1.

[5] This set, lately in the possession of Sir Percy Florence Shelley, is now in the library of Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer, of New York City. It bears evidence of hard use; and is marked thoughout by childish characters, perhaps in the hand of Shelley.

[6] This bit of Shelley's *juvenilia* was unknown until 1850, when Dr. Richard Garnett exhumed Stockdale's account of his dealings with Shelley in *Stockdale's Budget* for 1827. But not until 1898 did a copy (Charles Grove's) see the light. It was then reprinted by Dr. Garnett through John Lane.

But Stockdale shall himself relate the transaction which Shelley had with him: "The unfortunate subject of these very slight recollections introduced himself to me early in the autumn of 1810. With anxiety in his countenance, he requested me to extricate him from a pecuniary difficulty in which he was involved with a printer, whose name I cannot call to mind, but who resided at Horsham.[7]—On the 17th September, 1810, I received fourteen hundred and eighty copies of a thin royal octavo volume in sheets. It was entitled 'Original Poetry' by Alonzo [8] and Cazire, or two names something like them. The author told me that these poems were the joint production of himself and a friend.—I advertised the work which was to be retailed at 3s. 6d., in nearly all the London papers of the day." [9] Then, having announced the publication, Stockdale made an amazing discovery. Looking over the volume, he "recognized one which [he] knew to have been written by Mr. M. G. Lewis, the author of 'The Monk.'" He informed Shelley of his discovery. "With all the ardour natural to his character," says Stockdale, "he expressed the warmest resentment at the imposition practiced upon him by his coadjutor, and entreated me to destroy all the copies, of which about one hundred had been put into circulation."

Original Poetry: by Victor and Cazire consists of seventeen poems occupying sixty pages. Of these, by Dr. Garnett's reckoning,[10] Victor (i. e., Shelley) must stand sponsor for at least twelve, and Cazire (Elizabeth Shelley) for the two opening poems of the epistolary order; while the authorship of the

[7] Stockdale was in error; the Phillips firm was at Worthing.

[8] Here again Stockdale erred. The first pseudonym was "Victor."

[9] Advertisements of the work appeared in the *Morning Chronicle,* September 18, and *Morning Post,* September 19.

[10] Introduction to 1898 reprint of *Original Poetry: by Victor and Cazire.*

three remaining poems is still in doubt. Dr. Garnett further classifies the contents of his discovery as follows: first, familiar poems in the style of Anstey's "Bath Guide," the first two in the volume, already mentioned as by Elizabeth Shelley; second, a cycle of little poems evidently addressed by Shelley to Harriet Grove, in the summer of 1810 (Nos. 2–7, 12, 13); third, tales of terror and wonder in the style of Monk Lewis. (Nos. 14–17); and fourth, a few miscellaneous pieces (Nos. 8–11).

With the first of Dr. Garnett's divisions there is no cause to quarrel; but with the others perhaps that writer, were he now living, would no longer agree. In the first place, he evidently intends to begin his second group with No. 3, having already assigned No. 2 to Shelley's coadjutor. Yet I cannot see wherein the story of the wronged Louisa in any way bears upon Shelley's affection for Harriet Grove. No. 4 might well have been written by Shelley to her during a visit from his cousin to Field Place. It is dated "April 1810." The Stanza:

> The high trees that wave past the moon,
> As I walk in their umbrage with you,
> All declare I must part with you soon,
> All bid you a tender adieu!

suits the picture of the young lovers abroad in St. Leonard's Forest, or in the spacious grounds of St. Irving's Hills. By June there has come a change, for the song, *Despair*, thus dated, concludes in a minor key:

> . . . torn is dear affection's tie,
> Sinks the soft heart full low.

Sorrow, the next lyric of despair, bears the date, "August 1810," is of the same color, and seems in truth rather the

affectation of sorrow common to the "graveyard school" of verse than a poem springing from real emotion. Yet if we credit it as further recording the grief first voiced in *Despair*, reconciliation treads hard upon its heels; for *Hope* follows within the month, and he assures Harriet:

> . . . . I'll believe
> Thy whisperings soft of love and peace,
> God never made thee to deceive,
> 'Tis sin that bade thy empire cease.

I pass over the *Song, Translated from the Italian*, as too juvenile for comment or conjecture, to note the *Song, Translated from the German* wherein first appears that theme familiar to all readers of Shelley—the challenge to some courageous young Laon to arise and by dispossessing Tyranny and Priestcraft, to earn the love of an idealized Cythna. Sympathy with the afflictions of Ireland, which two years later was to take him, with his young bride, across the Irish Sea, is the mainspring of *The Irishman's Song*, next succeeding, wherein

> . . . the yelling ghosts ride on the blast that sweeps by,
> And "my countrymen! vengeance!" incessantly cry.

But Professor Saintsbury is of the opinion that "The most interesting thing—imitative, and awkwardly imitative, as it is for the most part, is the remarkable song, 'Fierce roars the midnight storm,' which has—a certain resemblance to Fitzeustace's song in *Marmion*, and, as I think, an almost more

[11] Cf. Captain Kennedy's evidence that Shelley in his early youth inclined to a belief in spiritualism. (Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ii. 549.) And see the illustrations drawn by Lady Diana Beauclerk for Spencer's translation (1796) of Bürger's *Lenore*—a work which Medwin says "produced a powerful effect" on Shelley. (*Life of Shelley*. i. 62.) Note also the refrain of Bürger's poem:

> How quick ride the dead!

certain resemblance, though in another sense, to Thackeray's more and less serious 'Willow Songs' in the *Fitzboodle Papers*. Although this has some of the rather lumbering and wallowing trisyllabics, imitated from the German, of the Lewisian versification," he says, "it has echo and quick, not dead, quality about it." [12] To the love sequence to Harriet belongs the next *Song*, subscribed "August 1810," wherein the lover vows eternal devotion:

> And thou dearest friend in his bosom for ever
> Must reign unalloyed by the fast rolling year,
> He loves thee, and dearest one never, O! never
> Canst thou cease to be loved by a heart so sincere.

The movement of the verse is Moore's in his Irish *Melodies* (1807). In a letter to Medwin, April 16, 1820, Shelley speaks of Byron and Moore as writers "who, being much better and more successful poets than I am, may be supposed to know better the road to success than one who has sought and missed it"; [13] and again to Horace Smith, within a few days of his own tragic end, Shelley writes: "Pray thank Moore for his obliging message. I wish I could as easily convey my sense of his genius and character." [14]

Saint Edmond's Eve, which succeeds this *Song*, is a plagiarism, word for word, of *The Black Canon of Elmham, or Saint Edmund's Eve* in Monk Lewis' *Tales of Terror*. Its successor, *Revenge*, has been traced by Dr. A. B. Young [15] to the story of the *Castle of Lindenberg* and the ballad of *Alonzo the Brave*, in Lewis' *Monk*; though he points out that Lewis'

[12] *History of English Prosody*. iii. 103–4.

[13] Ingpen. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 774.

[14] *Ibid*. ii. 982. Shelley also, in 1817, sent Moore a copy of his *Laon and Cythna*, which is now in the John Forster Collection, South Kensington.

[15] *Modern Language Review*, 1906.

work is not wholly original, being derived from German sources. The galloping verses distribute the emphasis, with little discrimination, upon important and unimportant words; [16] and the author is never at a loss to fill out a line, as for example, when he writes:

The night *it* was bleak, the fierce storm raged around.

Ghasta, or the Avenging Demon opens with what Dr. Garnett has well called "an audacious plagiarism" from Chatterton. Compare:

Harke! The ravenne flappes hys wynge,
In the briered dell below;
Harke! The dethe-owle loude doth synge,
To the nyghte-mares as heie goe.
—Chatterton, *Aella.*

Hark! the owlet flaps her wing,
In the pathless dell beneath,
Hark! night ravens loudly sing,
Tidings of despair and death.
Shelley, *Ghasta.*

He then proceeds to versify the story of the knight, the bleeding nun, and the Wandering Jew as set forth in Lewis' *Monk,* fourth chapter, even to the bold rehandling of Lewis' own verse refrain in the manner indicated by the following:

Agnes! Agnes! thou art mine!
Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!
In my veins while blood shall roll,
Thou art mine!
I am thine!
Thine my body! thine my soul!
—Lewis, *The Monk.*

Thou art mine and I am thine,
'Till the sinking of the world,
I am thine and thou art mine,
'Till in ruin death is hurled.
—Shelley, *Ghasta.*

[16] Cf. "Thicker, deeper, was swiftly extended a gloom."

The story had been versified by Lewis himself in *Tales of Wonder* (1801) and Shelley may have read this version before writing *Ghasta*. "Monk Lewis's Poems had a great attraction for him," wrote Hellen Shelley to Jane, Lady Shelley, in after years.[17]

Last poem in the volume, the *Fragment, or the Triumph of Conscience* appears to be a sequel in verse to *Zofloya, or the Moor* (3 vols., 1806) by Mrs. Byrne (or Charlotte Dacre, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Rosa Matilda") which novel was to furnish Shelley with most of the plot material of his two novels, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian*, discussed later. In *Zofloya* Victoria Loredani, after a career of crime, pays the price that Faust paid to the Devil.

The chief value of *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, then, is in its indications of Shelley's deep-seated admiration, as a boy, for the striking subject-matter and style of Chatterton, Lewis, and Scott; and in the series addressed to Harriet Grove, his early predilection for that lyrical self-revealment which was to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of his poetry. But here the emotion is seen through the cold crystal of eighteenth-century form and manner. The metre employed by Shelley in his metrical versions of Lewis' tales is the well-known metre of the German ballad of the *Erlkönig*, to which Lewis had called attention in a note to his *Tales of Wonder*. That of the poems to Harriet is iambic tetrameter with alternating rhyme, arranged in quatrains. The gallop of Pegasus in the former is mechanical; and even the love-sequence, though distinctly better in that it represents a spontaneous outburst of personal feeling, is rather the echo of that outburst than the voice itself.

[17] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 15.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that the *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire,* Shelley's first collected edition of verse, introduces us to the Wandering Jew, that character which was to have during his entire life the most singular fascination for him, and who appeared, as a result, in no less than four subsequent works from his pen. The first of these was a poem of four cantos on *The Wandering Jew,* written in 1810, when Shelley was eighteen. It was offered to Ballantyne and Co., Scott's Edinburgh publishers, who in a letter dated September 24, 1810, expressed regret that they could not sponsor its publication, and suggested that the poem was "perhaps better suited to the character and liberal feelings of the English, than the bigoted spirit which yet pervades many cultivated minds in this country," adding by way of illustration of the Scottish temper, that "Even Walter Scott is assailed on all hands, at present, by our Scotch spiritual and evangelical magazines and instructors, for having promulgated atheistical doctrines in *The Lady of the Lake.*" [18]

Four days later Shelley appealed to Stockdale:

Field Place, September 28th, 1810.

Sir,—I sent, before I had the pleasure of knowing you, the MS. of a poem to Messrs. Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh; they have declined publishing it, with the enclosed letter. I now offer it to you, and depend upon your honour as a gentleman for a fair price for the copyright. It will be sent to you from Edinburgh. The subject is *The Wandering Jew.* As to its containing atheistical principles, I assure you I was wholly unaware of the fact hinted at. Your good sense will point out the impossibility of inculcating pernicious doctrines

[18] The text of this and the succeeding letters relating to this poem are taken from Bertram Dobell's *Introduction* to the Shelley Society reprint of the poem, 1887.

in a poem which, as you will see, is so totally abstract from any circumstances which occur under the possible view of mankind.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient and humble Servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Ballantyne having failed to forward the MS. as promised, Shelley on November 19th wrote Stockdale: "If you have not got *The Wandering Jew* from Mr. B [allantyne], I will send you a MS. copy which I possess." Stockdale must then have reported to Shelley that the MS. had not arrived from Edinburgh, whereupon the latter forwarded the second MS. to the publisher, for on December 2, Shelley writes him: "Will you, if you have got two copies of *The Wandering Jew,* send one of them to me, as I have thought of some corrections which I wish to make."

Whether Stockdale returned the MS. to Shelley we do not know, but in any case we do know that he did not publish it. Shelley, however, still undaunted, but desiring to fortify his own opinion of the poem, submitted it to Campbell, Moore, Byron, Godwin, and Scott for their verdict. Scott's reply, which I believe to have been sent from Ashestiel, May 1st, 1811,[19] contains sound counsel:

I would . . . caution you against an enthusiasm which while it argues an excellent disposition and a feeling heart, requires to be watched and restrained, tho' not repressed. It is apt, if too much indulged, to engender a fastidious contempt for the ordinary business of the world, and gradually unfit us for the exercise of the useful and domestic virtues, which depend greatly on our not exalting our feelings above the temper of well-ordered and well-educated society.

[19] See article on *Scott and Shelley* by the present writer, in *Athenæum.* Nov. 19, 1920.

From the painting by Raeburn

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Who gave the youthful Shelley some good literary criticism.

No good man can ever be happy when he is unfit for the career of simple and commonplace duty, and I need not add how many melancholy instances there are of extravagance and profligacy being resorted to, under the pretence of contempt for the common rules of life.

Of the "idylls" which Shelley had sent to Scott for criticism that great and good man advised the young beginner:

. . . they seem to me to have all the merits, and most of the faults, of juvenile compositions. They are fanciful, tender, and elegant, and exhibit both command of language and luxuriance of imagination. On the other hand they are a little too wordy, and there is too much the air, to make the most of everything: too many epithets, and too laboured an attempt to describe minute circumstances. There is a perspective in poetry, as well as in painting, by which I mean the art of keeping your landscape, with its attributes, in harmony with your principal figures, and reserving your force of detailed expression for what you mean shall be the most prominent in your picture. This I think you sin a little against.

But his comments were not exclusively adverse, nor solely in the nature of warnings; "upon the whole, I think your specimen augurs very favourably of your talents, and that you have not any cause for the apprehensive dejection you have experienced, and which I confess I do not think the worst symptom of your powers; since it is a frequent attribute of genius to distrust its own powers." [20]

With this early advice from Scott, compare what Shelley, a decade later, received from Keats, who had just read *The Cenci:*

You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline

[20] *Diary of Frances, Lady Shelley.* (ed. Richard Edgcumbe, 1913) ii. 49–51.

must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furled for six months together.[21]

If such admonition was as Scott suggested it might be, "less romantic" than Shelley might have expected, it was not the less apt; but it must always have been difficult for Shelley to curb the restless steed of his "swift spirit."

[21] *Letters of John Keats*, ed. Sidney Colvin. 1891. p. 366.

INTERCHAPTER I:

Analysis of The Wandering Jew

The story of *The Wandering Jew*, which Shelley adapted to his own purposes in his poem on that subject, was undoubtedly derived from the German poem, *Der Ewige Jude*, by Schubart, an English translation of which had appeared in a monthly periodical, the *German Museum*, for June 1801. There are conflicting accounts, by Mary Shelley and Tom Medwin, as to whether Shelley or Medwin first discovered this translation on a fragment of paper, "dirty and torn," picked up in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Shelley later gave a partial translation of Schubart's verse tale in the note to *Queen Mab* vii. 67.[22] The notion of embedding the story of the unhappy wanderer within another story—the Rosa-Paulo plot—in his *Wandering Jew* was not original with Shelley; for as we have seen, Lewis had done this in his novel, *The Monk*, upon which Shelley had already drawn for his earlier volume of verse. With this introduction, the story of Shelley's poem, in which he had so much confidence, and the publishers so little, may be given.

CANTO I

Evening. A convent in Italy, near Padua. A crowd enters at the call of the convent bell. Among the company is a stranger, who has just dismounted from a swift courser.[23] A

[22] More exact is the English verse translation by Clarence Mangan, the Irish poet, in the *Dublin University Magazine* for December 1837. For a discussion of Shelley's treatment of the original in his translation see *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 December 1866.

[23] Cf. use of chapel scene, evening bell, entrance of a stranger knight, who has been riding a swift courser, in *Mistrust, or Blanche and Osbright* in Lewis' *Romantic Tales*, 1808. i. 11–13.

priest is officiating. An abbess stands at his side, a Pharisaical confidence of virtue in her cold demeanor. Four nuns bring forward Rosa, a novice, white-faced and fainting. Other nine novices strew the ground with roses, and

> . . . shed
> Sabæan incense o'er the head
> Of the devoted maid.

She is borne to the altar-rail. The traveler is roused to display an interest in her case. The audience, too, begins to show its unrest and dissatisfaction with the apparent coercion of the maiden. Their cries of protest, however, are stilled by the vigorous command of the abbess. The girl now breaks from her captors and plunges among the people. She is stopped by the traveler, and faints. He fearlessly carries her into the night of storm; and on a mountain-top, Rosa recovers consciousness. At sight of the stranger, Paulo, she is struck with fear; but his aspect changes to one of mild beneficence as he pledges his love of her.

> Rosa, wilt thou then be mine?
> Ever fairest, I am thine!

an echo, obviously, of the "Thou art mine" Lewisian refrain already employed in *Victor and Cazire.* She inquires how she has been brought to this wild place. Paulo explains, and again urges his love. She feels affection for her rescuer, yet distrusts him; but at last yields to his entreaties, exclaiming:

> Bear me away! I confide in thee!

CANTO II

The next day. Dawn. Victorio, descendant of Cosmo, roams along the Po, seeking his "wandered friend," Paulo.

For the latter, he has forgone rank and wealth, a life of ease in a castle

> Its towers embosomed deep in wood [24]

On the summit of

> Gigantic cliffs, with craggy steeps.

Paulo's hours meanwhile are being comforted by Rosa, under whose influence

> The dark clouds of grief would fly,
> Beneath the beams of sympathy;
> And love and converse sweet bestow,
> A transient requiem from woe.

Now enters an element of mystery, through a yet-unrevealed side of Paulo's life:

> Strange business, and of import vast,
> On things which long ago were past,
> Drew Paulo oft from home;
> Then would a darker, deeper shade,
> By sorrow traced, his brow o'erspread
> And o'er his features roam.

And as in Lewis' *Monk* the brow of the Wandering Jew, so

> . . . would the fillet of his brow
> Fierce as a fiery furnace glow,
> As it burn'd with red and lambent flame.

Always, however, Rosa was near to

> . . . soothe his tumults dire,
> . . . bid calm his grief,

[24] Cf. Milton, *L'Allegro:*

> Bosomed high in tufted trees.

. . . quench reflection's rising fire,
And give his soul relief.

On another storm-shaken night, when they have been discoursing of death, ghosts, and the state after death,[25] Rosa, as Ellen in *The Lady of the Lake* [26] for the imprisoned Douglas, takes up her harp and sings a mournful ballad of a betrayed maiden whose grief drives her to suicide. The music stirs Paulo to confess to Victorio and Rosa that he has a great secret which must be told, but only in its proper setting of wild nature and tumultuous storm.

CANTO III

Paulo recounts his story—of his insult to Christ as the latter was proceeding to Calvary:

I mocked our Saviour, and I cried,
Go, go, "Ah! I will go!" said he,
"Where scenes of endless bliss invite;
To the blest regions of the light
I go, but thou shalt here remain,—
Thou diest not till I come again,"—[27]

of his discovery after the Resurrection, that he himself was branded among men forever:

[25] Cf. the subjects of the evening conversations at Diodati in 1816, when Byron, Shelley, Mary, Claire, "Monk" Lewis, and Dr. Polidori foregathered about the hearth. Mary Shelley, *Preface* to revised edition (1831) of *Frankenstein*. Such topics had a perennial fascination for Shelley. Cf. *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, 49–54; *Alastor*, 27; and letter to Hogg, Jan. 6, 1811.

[26] Published in 1810, while *The Wandering Jew* was being written.

[27] Based in part upon Christ's words to Peter, John xxi. 21–2, quoted by Shelley on the title-page of the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* MS. of his *Wandering Jew*.

A burning cross illumed my brow,
I hid it with a fillet grey,
But could not hide the wasting woe
That wore my wildered soul away,
And ate my heart with living fire.
I knew it was the avenger's sway,
I felt it was the avenger's ire!

The fall of Jerusalem, the Crusades, he witnesses and outlives. He attempts suicide in ocean and volcano's mouth, but fails of his intent.[28] In a passage remarkable for its swift movement, foreshadowing that of his own *Cloud* and Tennyson's *Brook*, Paulo declares:

I pierce with intellectual eye,
Into each hidden mystery;
I penetrate the fertile womb
Of nature; I produce to light
The secrets of the teeming earth,
And give air's unseen embryos birth;

and again following the act of Lewis' Jew, in *The Monk*, Paulo

. . . raised his passion-quivering hand,
. . . loosed the grey encircling band,

and discovered "a burning cross" beneath, a sign which instils fear in Victorio, heretofore unused to this emotion. Once, he says, he saw a funeral, and cursed his own birth which had been the beginning of his imperishable existence. On another occasion he had thought to invoke death by the use of a certain magic spell—the formula of the circle, borrowed from Lewis' Monk—within which he invoked

[28] Cf. Note to *Queen Mab* vii, 67, seq.:
From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate etc.

A youthful female form;— she rode
Upon a rosy-tinted cloud;
Bright stream'd her flowing locks of gold;
She shone with radiant lustre bright,
And blazed with strange and dazzling light;
A diamond coronet deck'd her brow,
Bloom'd on her cheek a vermeil glow.

With these beautiful elements, however, were mixed others, characteristic of demons; and that she is of the family of *Geraldine* [29] and *Lorrinite* [30] is proved by her tempting him to end his miseries by stabbing himself. But he exorcises the spirit, whereupon

Loud shriek'd the fiend with piercing yell,
The clouds that roll'd athwart his eye
Reveal'd by its terrific ray,
Brilliant as the noontide day,
Gleam'd with a lurid fire;
Red lightnings darted round his head,
Thunder hoarse as the groans of the dead,
Pronounced their Maker's ire.

Paulo, at this revelation of evil, and the wild tumult of Nature, had fainted. When he recovered consciousness

. . . the storm was fled,
But sounds unholy met my ear,
And fiends of hell were flitting near.

Then, paraphrasing the speech of the Ghost of the Elder Hamlet to his son—itself used as motto for Canto II—Paulo says:

[29] In Coleridge's *Christabel.*
[30] In Southey's *Curse of Kehama.*

Rosa! I could a tale disclose,
So full of horror—full of woes,
Such as might blast a demon's ear,
Such as a fiend might shrink to hear.

CANTO IV

Opening with expressions of regret that Man continually slights

The charms which Nature yields,
The garniture of woods and fields,
The sun's all-vivifying light,
The glory of the moon by night,
And to himself alone a foe,
Forget [s] from whom these blessings flow,

Shelley lauds the sympathy that is the soul of friendship, and woman's love which can

. . . bestow
An heav'nly paradise below;

again reproaches Paulo for railing at Heaven and asks

What then is man, how few his days,
And heighten'd by what transient rays;
Made up of plans of happiness,
Of visionary schemes of bliss,
The varying passions of his mind
Inconstant, varying as the wind.

Paulo meanwhile finds comfort for his weary heart in the affection of Rosa. This rouses the jealousy of Victorio, who in a true lover's passion rushes to the edge of a high cliff to precipitate himself into the cave,

When a soft and silver sound [31]
Was borne upon the wind's soft swell.
Victorio started—'twas the knell [32]
Of some departed soul;

and deflected from his intent by the sound, he saved himself by catching at

. . . the branches of an oak,
Which, riven by the lightning's stroke,
O'erhung the precipice's brink,

and fled from the dangerous spot. As he ran, he groaned:

I burn with love! I pant for death!

At the words, a witch appears who promises to fulfil his desire if he will follow her. This he does, and their way leads them to a wild crag, beneath which is

. . . a caverned cell,
More pitchy than the shades of hell,

which Victorio entering, he passes over the bodies of many dead, until at length she promises him, as Matilda had promised Ambrosio possession of Antonia (*The Monk*, vii)

Rosa is Paulo's—can be thine,
For the secret power is mine.

The witch traces a magic circle, now used for the second time, on the floor. In response to her incantations, Satan himself appears [33] and offers Victorio "a potent drug," promising that

[31] Cf. Anne Radcliffe, *The Italian*. 1797. i. 178; and Charlotte Dacre. *Zofloya, or the Moor*. 1806. ii. 199 seq. for the same device.

[32] Cf. Shelley's "The death bell beats!" (*Sister Rosa: a Ballad*, 1) a plagiarism from Bürger, *Lenore* (Spencer's translation).

[33] As in *Zofloya, or the Moor*.

Whoever quaffs its fatal tide,
Is mingled with the dead.

The cave, Satan, and the witch disappear, and Victorio finds himself looking into a casket, wherein the cup of Satan lies. A requiem is heard, whose beauty is compared with the most harmonious sounds of nature:

See yon opening flower
Spreads its fragrance to the blast;
It fades within an hour,
Its decay is pale, is fast.
Paler is yon maiden;
Faster is her heart's decay;
Deep with sorrow laden,
She sinks in death away.[34]

Paulo now breaks forth into lamentation over his lost love, and over the eternal Curse that has been visited upon him. And *The Wandering Jew* comes to an end with the lines:

"Oh Demon! I am thine!" he cried,
A hollow fiendish voice replied,
"Come! for thy doom is misery!"

The metrical scheme of *The Wandering Jew* is iambic four-foot with frequent substitutions of trochees and anapæsts, and, throughout the poem, of three-foot, and less commonly five-foot lines. In this scheme we can perceive an anticipation of the measure employed eight years later (1818) in *Rosalind and Helen.* It would be easy—too easy—to select a score of the worst examples of his juvenile metrics; but it seems to me neither profitable, nor fair to the poet, to scrutinise too

[34] Credited to Shelley by Medwin. *Life of Shelley.* i. 58.

closely the first efforts, in extended verse narrative, of the youth of eighteen summers. Almost any page offers one or more examples of faulty rhythms. But the poem, bad as it undoubtedly is, is so much better than the average production of budding versifiers, that Shelley is, in my opinion, to be forgiven much. The fact that he did not give us the mere jigging trot of most German ballads of the Gothic grotesque school, is certainly a point in his favor. If in striving to secure variety —and *The Wandering Jew* is the evidence that Shelley did so strive—he fumbled his substitutions, sometimes converting his stanza into a perfect melange of measures, and causing his narrative to stop and start like a frightened horse, we can surely overlook these juvenile errors. He has the faculty, notwithstanding, of creating and holding interest; and it is my belief that in tale-telling Shelley only once, in prose or verse, went so directly and successfully about it as he did in *The Wandering Jew*. That occasion was when he wrote *The Cenci*. *The Wandering Jew* has a forward rush of incident, a clever management of suspense, and a mixed atmosphere of terror and awe at once unusual and compelling. Not even the woodenness of occasional passages wherein Shelley endeavors to portray a passing expression of face or eye, or to compass the kaleidoscopic miracle of a tempest in the midst of wild nature, can rob him of this meed of praise. The calmer portions of the story, wherein humanity and nature are momentarily at peace, suggest that the poems of Collins and Thompson were not unknown to him.

To trace Shelley's varying management of the legend of *Le Juif Errant* from this his first extended effort in verse, through *Queen Mab*, *The Assassins*, and *Hellas* is to trace in part the evolution of the poet's mind. Although Shelley does not employ the metre of German balladry, the Wander-

ing Jew is made to undergo such adventures, and outface such dire perils, as it was the wont of all good and persecuted heroes of that balladry to do. Shelley was always eager to hurl himself into the lists against the arrant oppressor, and on behalf of the victim of oppression. The figure of the Wandering Jew, compelled, for one "error" as Godwin would have termed it, to undergo eternal torment, awakened Shelley's sympathies and set his finger-tips itching to be at an *apologia* for the unhappy and long-chastened Hebrew.

But the theme of his first work on *The Wandering Jew* which Shelley sent to Stockdale and Ballantyne without success, is not the theme of the Ahasuerus of *Queen Mab*, forerunner of Prometheus, for on this second appearance he is no longer in flight from the Eternal Curse; he has turned rebel against One he deems a tyrant, and has flung down the gauge of his own denial of His omnipotency. It is not the theme, either, of the Jew in *The Assassins*, who is the Ahasuerus of *Queen Mab* in a new setting. Nor is it that of the

> wise mad talk of the old Jew

of *Hellas*, the Shelleyan oracle of Berkeley's philosophy [35] that "Nothing exists but as it is perceived" and that hence all tyrannies, which are mere chimæras of the too-credulous mind, cease to exert their power when that mind becomes enlightened, and denies them a further lease of life. The woebegone wanderer of this early effort, pursued by the inescapable and enduring Curse, cries out, in effect:

> Me miserable! Which way shall I fly?

[35] Cf. Shelley's comment on Lloyd's marginal note in Southey's copy of Berkeley. Letter to Leigh Hunt, September 27, 1819. Ingpen, *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 722.

Infinite wrath, and infinite despaire.
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell; [36]

but does not suggest rebellion. On the other hand he is mild, and kindly, and awakens our pity and commiseration.

[36] Shelley used these lines as motto of Canto i of *The Wandering Jew*, ascribing them to *Paradise Lost*. They are found in Book iv. 73–5 of that poem.

CHAPTER III

(CONTINUED)

PASSING from this poem, we may note that Medwin ascribes to the period of its composition another work, now lost. "We that winter [i. e. 1809–10] wrote," he testifies, "in alternate chapters, the commencement of a wild and extravagant romance, where a hideous witch played the principal part, and whose portrait—not a very inviting one—is given in *The Wandering Jew*[37]—:

When suddenly, a meteor's glare
With brilliant flash illumed the air,
Bursting thro clouds of sulphurous smoke,
As from a witch's form it broke;
Of Herculean bulk her frame
Seemed blasted by the lightning's flame—
Her eyes, that flared with lurid light,
Were now with bloodshot lustre filled,
They blazed like comets through the night,
And now thick rheumy gore distilled;
Black as the raven's plume, her locks
Loose streamed upon the pointed rocks—
Wild floated on the hollow gale,
Or swept the ground in matted trail:
Vile loathsome weeds, whose pitchy fold
Were blackened by the fire of Hell,
Her shapeless limbs of giant mould

[37] iv. 1193–1212. Medwin's version is nearly correct. He omitted line 1201 of the 1887 text.

Scarce served to hide, as she the while
"Grinned horribly a ghastly smile,"
And shrieked with hideous [38] yell.

But if we have not one surviving line of this extravaganza, we are not so unfortunate—or should I say fortunate?—in respect to another work of fiction of 1810. Discussing Shelley's romance with Harriet Grove and its untimely end, Medwin says that Shelley "wrote a novel, that might have issued from the Minerva Press, entitled *Zastrozzi*, which embodies much of the intensity of the passion that devoured him, and some of the chapters were, he told me, by Miss Grove." *Zastrozzi!* To discover the source of the title and plot of this strange romance, published by G. Wilkie and J. Robinson, 57, Paternoster Row, London, June 5, 1810, we must turn back to Medwin's account of Shelley's reading at Sion House. "As there was no school library" he says, "we soon resorted, 'under the rose,' to a low circulating one in the town [Brentford], and here the treasures at first seemed inexhaustible.—Anne Radclyffe's (*sic*) works pleased him most, particularly *The Italian*, but the Rosa-Matilda school, especially a strange, wild romance, entitled *Zofloya, or the Moor*, a Monk-Lewisy production, where his Satanic Majesty, as in *Faust*, plays the chief part, enraptured him. The two novels he afterwards wrote, entitled *Zastrozzi* and *The Rosicrucian*, were modelled after this ghastly production, all of which I now remember, is, that the principal character is an incarnation of the devil, but who, unlike *The Monk* (then a prohibited book, but afterwards an especial favourite with Shelley) instead of tempting a man and turning him into a likeness of himself, enters into a woman called Olympia, who poisons her husband homœo-

[38] *demon* in the 1887 text.

pathically, and ends by being carried off very melodramatically in blue flames to the place of dolor." [39]

Despite the contradictions of fact in this statement,[40] Medwin was undoubtedly right in his account of Shelley's enthusiasm for the novel, and employment of its plot in the construction of his two juvenile prose romances. Furthermore, his statement is supported by a casual reference by Shelley himself, in a letter to Edward Graham, July 15, 1811, written from Cwm Elan, Radnorshire, South Wales. Shelley says to Graham: "This is a most delightful place,—adapted for the Rosa-Matildan style of rhapsodizing." "Rosa Matilda" it will be recalled, was the pseudonym used by Charlotte Dacre (Mrs. Byrne) author of *Zofloya, or the Moor.*

In this exaggerated romance of terror and sentimentality, two characters appear whose names furnished Shelley with the name *Zastrozzi,* with which he christened his first published prose romance. They are "Megalena *Strozzi*" and "Signor *Za*ppi." The combination of the italicized portions of these names gave Shelley his title in the same manner as the names "*Frank*heim" and "Falk*enstein*" from Monk Lewis' tales [41] probably supplied Mary Shelley, eight years after, with the title for her romance of *Frankenstein.* Dr. A. H. Koszul confirmed Medwin's assertion and added, as another source, Regnault-Warin's *La Caverne de Strozzi* (Paris, 1798).[42] Next, A. M. D. Hughes took up the scent, proved the *Zofloya*

[39] *Revised Life of Shelley.* p. 25.

[40] *Zofloya, or the Moor* was not issued until 1806. Shelley could not have read it at Brentford.

[41] The Castle of Frankheim appears in *Mistrust, or Blanche and Osbright* (*Romantic Tales.* 1808. i. 3–251) and the fourth narrative following has as its title, *The Lord of Falkenstein.* Lewis, furthermore, was actually in the company of the Shelleys in Switzerland in 1816 when the idea of *Frankenstein* was first suggested to Mary.

[42] *La Jeunesse de Shelley.* 1910. p. 22; and *Revue Germanique,* March 1905.

source, and added Lewis' *Ambrosio, or the Monk* (1795); Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797); and Godwin's *St. Leon* (1799) as other wells from which the youthful romancer drew his inspiration.

"The story of *Zastrozzi* is woven about Verezzi, a scion of nobility; Zastrozzi, a man of mystery, whose persecution of Verezzi, though not motiveless, is more malignant than natural; and Matilda, in love with Verezzi, who scorns her. By a trick, Zastrozzi brings to consummation Matilda's desire to be loved by Verezzi; but ultimately, the game of the two being revealed to Verezzi, he commits suicide. Zastrozzi, taken into the custody of the Inquisition, calmly declares that his long persecution of Verezzi was born of the latter's betrayal of his [Zastrozzi's] mother; and, confident in virtue, faces the rack with imperturbable calm." *Zastrozzi* was seriously reviewed in the *Critical Review*[42a] for November 1810. This review discovered the romance "so truly contemptible that we should have passed it unnoticed had not our indignation been excited by the open and barefaced immorality and grossness displayed throughout." The reviewer could not recall when he had "felt so much indignation as in the perusal of this execrable production. The author of it cannot be too severely reprobated. Not all his 'scintillated eyes,' his 'battling emotions,' his 'frigorific torpidity of despair,' nor his 'Lethean torpor,' with the rest of his nonsensical and stupid jargon, ought to save him from infamy and his volume from the flames."

This is harsh criticism; but most readers of *Zastrozzi* who endeavor, as this reviewer did, to take the book seriously, would to-day be even more harsh. Even Dowden, who least of all Shelley's biographers would be likely to record one adverse word against the poet, is compelled to say, as to the

[42a] Third Series. xxi. 329–331.

characters in *Zastrozzi*, that "they are like the ladies and gentlemen of a travelling waxwork show, whose breasts heave, whose eyes roll, when the creaking machinery within them is wound up and set in jerky motion." On the other hand, the same writer has suggested that "it was the brain that conceived Zastrozzi which created Count Cenci, and the inventor of Julia and La Comtessa di Laurentini who in after years made Asia the consoler and sustainer of Prometheus." [43]

"We may observe," suggests Mr. Hughes, "that he elaborates beyond his models the terrors of Verezzi's underground prison (*Zastrozzi*, i.; the delirium and crawling worms are his addition); the agony of a dangerous illness (*Zastrozzi*, vi.) and especially the erotic tension and tumult between Verezzi and Matilda, in which, remarkably enough, there is more energy and detail than in Lewis or Mrs. Byrne." [44]

Zastrozzi, published, as has been stated, on June 5, 1810, was advertised in the *Times* on the 5th and 12th. "Among my latest recollections of Shelley's life at Eton," declares Mr. Packe, "is the publication of *Zastrozzi*, for which I think he received £40. With part of the proceeds he gave a most magnificent banquet to eight of his friends, among whom I was included." [45] Three letters of Shelley refer to this first novel. Writing from Eton College, May 7, 1809, to Longman and Co., the London publishers, he says:

It is my intention to complete and publish a Romance, of which I have already written a large portion, before the end of July.—My object in writing it was not pecuniary, as I am independent, being the heir of a gentleman of large fortune in the county of Sussex, and

[43] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 47.

[44] *Modern Language Review*. vol. vii, pp. 54–63. art. on *Shelley's Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne*.

[45] *Shelley Memorials*, edited by Lady Shelley. 1859. p. 6.

prosecuting my studies as an Oppidan at Eton; from the many leisure hours I have, I have taken an opportunity of indulging my favourite propensity in writing. Should it produce any pecuniary advantage, so much the better for me, I do not expect it. If you would be so kind as to answer this, direct it to me at the Rev. George Bethell's. Might I likewise request the favour of secrecy until the Romance is published.

Apparently publication was delayed beyond July 1809, the date first settled upon by the hopeful young Etonian. The cause of the delay is not easy to determine. But on April 1, 1810, in another letter from Eton, to Edward Graham, a protégé of Sir Timothy's, and an intimate of the Shelley children, Shelley promises him:

I will see you at Easter,—next Friday I shall be in London, but for a very short time—unable to call on you till Passion weeke [*sic*] —Robinson will take no trouble about the reviewers, let everything proper be done about the venal villains & I will settle with you when we meet at Easter,—We will all go in a posse to the booksellers in Mr. Groves barouche & four—shew them we are no grub street gazeteers [*sic*]—but why Harriet more than any one else—a faint essay, I see, in return for my enquiry for Caroline—We will not be *cheated* again let us come over Jock, for if he will not give me a devil of a price for my Poem, & at least 60£ for my new Romance in three volumes the dog shall not have them pouch the reviewers 10£ will be sufficient I should suppose, & that I can with the greatest ease repay when we meet at Passion Week.

Send the reviews in which Zastrozzi is mentioned to Field Place, the British review is the hardest, let that be pouched well—My note of hand if for any larger sum is quite at your service, as it is of consequence in fiction to establish your name as high as you can in the literary lists—.[46]

[46] The text of this letter is here given from the Bodleian holograph original, and was first so published by the writer in the *Athenæum* for July 30, 1920. More or less correct texts of the letter had previously appeared.

Graham must have failed to "pouch" some of the reviewers; for the "venal villains" of the *Critical Review* made much sport of Shelley, declaring that "a more discordant, disgusting, and despicable performance has not, we are persuaded, issued from the press for some time." [47] But Shelley could not be "killed off by one critique." [48] Instead, he urges Graham, in a postscript to a letter from Eton, May 29th, to "send a *Zastrozzi* directed to the Revd.-Sayer, Leominster, near Arundel," and to "send it directly," since he had "written to say it was coming." [49]

Thus, filled with many literary enterprises, went by Shelley's closing days at Eton, and those intervening between his withdrawal from school to university. Palpably imitative and grotesque as these works are, their clumsy action centered in characters less human than allegorical, they exhibit Shelley's early love of melodramatic narrative with a didactic turn, and the passion of story-telling that seemed born in him. To the end of the English period of his authorship, and less clearly beyond, the lessons learned from "Rosa Matilda," "Monk" Lewis, and Robert Southey, were never wholly forgotten; and images, plot situations, even phrases betray these origins of Shelley's inspiration. But fortunately, within the same period, other influences were also at work, better and finer influences, and even if we did not have in this early work the quotations from Shakespeare and Milton and Thomson to prove our contention we should know that *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*, and *Paradise Lost*, and *The Seasons* had already had their share in moulding the thought and style of the young Shelley.

[47] *Critical Review.* Third Series. xxi. pp. 329–330.
[48] *Don Juan.* Canto xi. st. lx.
[49] *Revised Life of Shelley.* p. 456.

CHAPTER IV

OXFORD

Hogg—Shelley's Personality—The Necessity of Atheism

NEW light on the state of the University of Oxford at this period has lately been shed by the publication of the *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, the autobiography of Elizabeth Grant, a niece of Dr. Griffith, Master of University College, who visited Oxford in 1810–11. Says Miss Grant:

Two facts struck me, young as I was, during our residence at Oxford; the ultra-Tory politics and the stupidity and frivolity of the society. The various Heads, with their respective wives, were extremely inferior to my uncle and aunt. More than half of the Doctors of Divinity were of humble origin, the sons of small gentry or country clergy, or even of a lower grade; many of these, constant to the loves of their youth, brought ladies of inferior manners to grace what appeared to them so dignified a station. It was not a good style; there was little talent and less polish and no sort of knowledge of the world, and yet the ignorance of this class was less offensive than the assumption of another, where a lady of high degree had fallen in love with her brother's tutor and got him handsomely provided for in the church that she might excuse herself for marrying him. Of the lesser clergy there were young witty ones, odious, and young learned ones, bores, and elderly ones, pompous; all, of all grades, kind and hospitable. But the Christian pastor, humble and gentle, and considerate and self-sacrificing, occupied with his duties, and filled with the "charity" of his Master, had no representative, as far as I could see, among these dealers in old wines, rich dinners, fine china, and massive plate. The religion of Oxford appeared in

those days to consist in honouring the king and his *ministers*, and in perpetually popping in and out of chapel. All the Saints' days and all the eves of Saints' days were kept holy, every morning and every evening there were prayers in every College chapel, lengthened on Wednesdays and Fridays by the addition of the Litany. My uncle attended the morning prayers regularly, Jane and I with him, all being roused by the strokes of a big hammer, beaten on every staircase half an hour before by a scout. In the afternoons he frequently omitted this duty, as the hour, six o'clock, interfered with the dinner-parties, the company at that time assembling about five. The education was suited to the divinity. A sort of supervision was said to be kept over the young riotous community, and to a certain extent the Proctors of the University and the Deans of the different Colleges did see that no very open scandals were committed. There were rules that had in a general way to be obeyed, and there were lectures that must be attended, but as for care to give high aims, provide refining amusements, give a worthy tone to the character of responsible beings, there was none ever even thought of. The very meaning of the word education did not appear to be understood. The College was a fit sequel to the school. The young men herded together, they lived in their rooms, or they lived out of them in the neighbouring villages, where many had comfortable establishments. Some liked study, attended the lectures, and read up with their tutors, laughed at by the others who preferred hunting, gaming, supper parties, etc. The chapel-going was felt to be "an uncommon bore," and was shirked as much as possible, little matter, as no good could possibly follow so vain a ceremony. All sorts of contrivances were resorted to, to enable the dissipated to remain out at night, to shield a culprit, to deceive the dignitaries. It was a drive at random of a low and most thoughtless kind; the extravagance consequent on which often ruined parents who had sacrificed much to give a son the much-prized university education. The only care the Heads appeared to take with regard to the young minds they were supposed to be placed where they were and paid well to help to form, was to keep the persons of the

students at the greatest possible distance. They conversed with them never, invited them to their homes never, spoke or thought about them never. A perpetual bowing was their only intercourse; a bow of humble respect acknowledged by one of stiff condescension limited the intercourse of the old heads and the young, generally speaking.[1]

"Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley was brought to Oxford by his father at a very tender age," writes Henry Slatter, "but," he adds that though young, Shelley had "a highly cultivated understanding."[2] This joint pilgrimage of father and son must have occurred on or before April 10, 1810, on which day this entry appears in the books of University College:

Percy Bysshe Shelley. *Sub tutamine Magistri Rowley et Domini Davison.*

It was not the intention of Timothy Shelley that his son should actually enter at once into academic life at the University; but as was the general custom in those days, matriculation preceded established residence by a few months, during which "grace terms" were kept in the country. Slatter adds a circumstance of this first visit to Oxford which, in the light of events in the succeeding March, and the attitude of Sir Timothy toward those events, has its humorous side. To the printing firm of J. Munday (who had lately taken Slatter into his firm) Sir Timothy repaired with his son, and there gave a particular injunction to the boy to buy whatever he required in books and stationery at this shop. Moreover, Sir Timothy announced to the printers: "My son here has a literary turn,

[1] *Memoirs of a Highland Lady,* edited by Lady Strachey. London. John Murray. 1899. pp. 124–5.

[2] Letter to Robert Montgomery, Dec. 18, 1833, published in Montgomery's *Oxford,* a Poem. Third Edition. Revised, with Additional Notes and Biographical Recollections. 1834.

he is already an author, and do pray indulge him in his printing freaks."

Shelley now returned to Eton, where on July 30 he pronounced his speech of Cicero against Catiline and no doubt in so doing gained a confidence in public speaking which stood him in good stead a year and a half later in Ireland. The summer and early autumn months had seen the ripening of his romance with Harriet Grove, the composition and publication of *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, and endeavours to secure a publisher for *The Wandering Jew*. At length Shelley entered the city of spires and towers as Leicester Scholar of University College, having been nominated to that honor by Sir John Shelley-Sidney, of Penshurst, heir of the Sidney Earls of Leicester. The rooms assigned him at his college were "on the first floor, and on the right of the entrance, but by reason of the turn in the stairs, when you reach them, they will be upon your left hand." [3]

Throughout his life Shelley was rarely if ever without "one sole friend" to whom he confided his dreams and aspirations, and who brought to him such spiritual companionship as calmed and cheered him. We have already observed his affection for one school-mate. Between Shelley's Eton and Oxford experiences the anonymous author [4] of *A Newspaper Editor's Reminiscences* which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, June 1841, seems to have been on such terms of intimacy with him; but as later this friend became openly antagonistic to Shelley's views of Christianity, the comradeship was broken off with hot words on both sides, and the breach was never healed.

[3] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 67. The suite has now become the Junior Common Room.

[4] Believed by Forman to be William Henry Merle, author of *Constanca, a Poem*, and some novels; but by Garnett to be Gibbons Neale.

About this time a third Jonathan appeared. This was Thomas Jefferson Hogg, "eldest son of John Hogg, D.L. and barrister at law of Lincoln's Inn," a young man who was later to draw not only the best descriptive portrait of Shelley, but, in the same work, his own most substantial likeness.[5] Three decades later Trelawny included Hogg among those few friends of the poet "who loved and did not rob him [Shelley]."[6] The saying, in so far as its implications touch Godwin, and Hunt, and even Peacock (to list no other beneficiaries of Shelley) is a hard one; but true, certainly, with reference to that rare mixture of scholar and man-of-the-world, Hogg.

They met for the first time over their dinner in the hall of University College, and became so absorbed in a discussion of the relative merits of the German and Italian literatures that they found themselves at last alone in the hall, all the other diners having departed during their harangue. They adjourned to end the debate in Hogg's rooms. But when each confessed to the other that he knew nothing at first hand of the literature he was so passionately defending, the argument terminated in peals of laughter, and in Shelley's diverting the discussion to the marvels of chemistry.

"As I felt, in truth," writes Hogg, "but a slight interest in the subject of his conversation [i. e. chemistry] I had leisure to examine, and I may add, to admire, the appearance of my very extraordinary guest. It was a sum of many contradic-

[5] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley. In Four Vols.* (only vols. i. and ii. issued) 1858. The work was left incomplete because the Shelley family—i. e., Sir Percy Florence Shelley and his wife, Jane, Lady Shelley—being displeased with some features of the first two volumes when they appeared, withdrew from Hogg the materials—MSS., records, etc.—on which he was at work.

[6] Letter to Claire Clairmont, 13 June 1870. *Letters of Edward John Trelawny.* (1910) p. 230.

From a contemporary aquatint

HALL OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Where Hogg and Shelley met for the first time, in October, 1810.

tions. His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much,[7] that he seemed of a low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day; but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate, and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. His features, his whole face, and particularly his head were, in fact, unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough.—His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I have never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) that air of profound religious veneration that characterizes the best works and chiefly the frescoes—of the great masters of Florence and of Rome.[8] But there was one physical blemish—the voice of the stranger was excruciating; it was intolerably shrill, harsh, and

[7] Cf. Captain Kennedy's confirmation of this. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 547. And cf. Trelawny, *Recollections*, p. 140.

[8] Cf. Peacock. *Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, in *Fraser's Magazine*, June 1858: reprinted in *Works*, 1875. iii. 396.

discordant; of the most cruel intension,—it was perpetual, and without any remission, it excoriated the ears."

This defect Shelley must have had, for Peacock also affirms it, and says "it was chiefly observable when he spoke under excitement. Then his voice was not only dissonant, like a jarring string, but he spoke in sharp fourths, the most unpleasing sequence of sound that can fall on the human ear: but it was scarcely so when he spoke calmly, and not at all so when he read; on the contrary he seemed then to have his voice under perfect command; it was good both in tune and in tone; it was low and soft, but clear, distinct, and expressive. I have heard him read almost all Shakespeare's tragedies, and some of his more poetical comedies, and it was a pleasure to hear him read them." [9] Mary's description of his voice [10] might appear the tribute of a prejudiced witness, but it happens to be supported by the testimony of others. She tells us that "his thrilling voice, like sweetest melody, awoke a mute echo within me, stirring to its depths the life-blood in my frame." Trelawny agrees: "It was not until he spoke that you could discern anything uncommon in him—but the first sentence he uttered, when excited by his subject, riveted your attention. The light from his very soul streamed from his eyes,—he left the conviction on the minds of his audience, that however great he was as a poet, he was greater as an orator." [11] Surely, if there is any truth in Mary or Trelawny, we can accept Hogg's statement of the unremitting discordancy of Shelley's voice only with reservations. Hogg liked to play on an idea of this sort, mainly, I take it, for what humor he might get out of it.

[9] *Works.* iii. 395.
[10] *The Last Man.* i. 40.
[11] *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* 1858. pp. 140–1.

As it developed, Hogg was obliged to listen to that excoriating voice for many months and even years to come; for the acquaintance thus casually begun ripened into a friendship which, like Hogg's conception of Shelley's appearance, was "a sum of many contradictions." Hogg, more practical in temperament than "the divine poet," as he always called Shelley, had been bred a Tory and a Church of England man; but a turn toward cynicism and skepticism had weakened the bonds of home training and inclined his sympathies toward iconoclasm. This skepticism Shelley, fresh from the reading of Godwin's *Political Justice* at Eton, shared with him; but whereas Hogg indulged in skepticism as a pleasant pastime, Shelley could not be content with parlor radicalism. He must preach and publish and convert his fellows from their present state of darkness. So, taking his cue from Voltaire, Shelley cried, "Ecrasez l'infame!" [12] or "Down with intolerance! Down with Bigotry!" [13]

When Hogg accepted an invitation to visit the rooms of the young iconoclast, he found a state of things similar to that which seventeen years before had characterized Southey's room at Balliol. Southey wrote to Grosvenor Bedford that, crowded into a little space on the table in his study were "a lexicon, Homer, inkstand, candles, snuffers, wine, bread and cheese, nutmeg grater, and hour glass." [14] But Shelley's room displayed chaos worse confounded. Hogg enumerates:

[12] This theme from Voltaire's *Correspondence* aroused the indignant protest of the Abbé Barruel, whose *Memoirs of the History of Jacobinism,* in Clifford's English version (4 vols. 1798) Shelley read at various times from 1810 to 1814. Subsequently, the words came to adorn the title-page of *Queen Mab.* 1813.

[13] Letter to Hogg. Dec. 20, 1810. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 145.

[14] Letter, Saturday, Feb. 12, 1793, published in *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey.* i. 173.

"Books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable, with money, stockings, prints, crucibles, bags, and boxes, were scattered on the floor and in every place.—The table, and especially the carpet, were already stained with large spots of various hues, which frequently proclaimed the agency of fire. An electrical machine, and air pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers, were conspicuous amidst the mass of matter. Upon the table by his side were some books lying open, several letters, a bundle of new pens, and a bottle of Japan ink, that served as an inkstand; a piece of deal, lately part of the lid of a box, with many chips, and a handsome razor that had been used as a knife. There were bottles of soda water, sugar, pieces of lemon, and the traces of an effervescent beverage. Two piles of books supported the tongs, and these upheld a small glass retort above an argand lamp." [15]

Shelley now initiated his new acquaintance into some of the mysteries of the sciences. Says Hogg: "He proceeded, with much eagerness and enthusiasm, to show me the various instruments, especially the electrical apparatus: turning round the handle very rapidly, so that the fierce, crackling sparks flew forth; and presently standing upon the stool with glass feet, he begged me to work the machine until he was filled with the fluid, so that his long, wild locks bristled and stood on end. Afterwards he charged a powerful battery of several large jars; labouring with vast energy, and discoursing with increasing vehemence of the marvellous powers of electricity, of thunder and lightning; describing an electrical kite that he had made at home, and projecting another and an enormous one, or rather a combination of many kites, that would

[15] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 69, 70.

draw down from the sky an immense volume of electricity, the whole ammunition of a mighty thunderstorm: and this being directed to some point would there produce the most stupendous results." [16]

Hogg was not in sympathy with these experiments. They "seemed to an unskilful observer to promise nothing but disasters. His hands, his clothes, his books, and his furniture were stained and corroded by mineral acids. More than one hole in the carpet could elucidate the ultimate phenomenon of combustion: especially a formidable aperture in the middle of the room, where the floor also had been burnt by the spontaneous ignition caused by mixing ether with some other fluid in a crucible: and the honourable wound was speedily enlarged by rents, for the philosopher, as he hastily crossed the room in pursuit of truth, was frequently caught in it by the foot. Many times a day, but always in vain, would the sedulous scout say, pointing to the scorched boards with a significant look—'Would it not be better, Sir, for us to get this place mended?'" [17]

Together the friends read, studied, conversed, and went on long cross-country walks. On some of the latter Shelley,[18] until finally dissuaded by Hogg, persisted in carrying a pair of duelling pistols. Target-shooting was always pleasurable to him; as late as 1821 Edward Williams, companion of Shelley and Byron in Italy, wrote in his journal: "Monday, December 3rd, S[helley] hits the half-crown." [19] These rambles with Hogg led frequently to Shotover Hill, where, by a pond at its foot, "he would linger until dusk, gazing in silence on

[16] *Ibid.* i. 70, 71.

[17] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 74.

[18] Cf. Thornton Hunt, "Shelley as I Knew Him," *Atlantic Monthly,* 1863.

[19] Richard Garnett ed. *Journal of Edward Ellerker Williams,* etc. 1902. p. 29.

the water, repeating verses aloud, or earnestly discussing themes that had no connexion with surrounding objects." [20]

"The country near Oxford," Shelley told Hogg, "has no pretensions to peculiar beauty, but it is quiet, and pleasant, and rural, and purely agricultural after the good old fashion; it is not only unpolluted by manufactures and commerce, but it is exempt from the desecration of the modern husbandry, of a system that accounts the farmer a manufacturer of hay and corn; I delight to wander over it." [21] Intensely interested as Shelley came to be in the welfare of humanity, and the aspirations of the race, he seems always to have preferred the country to the town, and solitude to the massed gatherings of the people. "Towns and crowds distracted him," [22] declares Trelawny; and as an undergraduate he "shunned all college meetings, including dinner in hall." [23]

This last being so, the friends were accustomed to conclude a protracted ramble in the country with tea and supper in Shelley's rooms. On one occasion, when the length of their walk had delayed their return past the supper hour, they found a large dish of scalloped oysters waiting for them within the fender of the open fire-place. "Among the innumerable contradictions in the character and deportment of the youthful poet," says Hogg, "was a strange mixture of a singular grace, which manifested itself in his actions and gestures, with an occasional awkwardness almost as remarkable. As soon as we entered the room, he placed his chair as usual directly in front of the fire, and eagerly pressed forward to warm himself, for the frost was severe, and he was very sen-

[20] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 81–2.
[21] *Ibid.* i. 91–2.
[22] *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*. p. 67.
[23] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 85.

sible of cold. Whilst cowering over the fire and rubbing his hands, he abruptly set both his feet at once upon the edge of the fender; it immediately flew up, threw under the grate the dish, which was broken into two pieces, and the whole of the delicious mess was mingled with the cinders and ashes," but Shelley's immediate and comic attitude "of exaggerated surprise, disappointment, and contrition" [24] was sufficient to disarm the quite-naturally incensed Hogg.

"Oxonian society was insipid to me," wrote Shelley to Godwin, "uncongenial with my habits of thinking. I could not descend to common life: the sublime interest of poetry, lofty and exalted achievements, the proselytism of the world, the equalization of its inhabitants, were to me the soul of my soul. You can probably form some idea of the contrast exhibited to my character by those with whom I was surrounded. Classical reading and poetical writing employed me during my residence at Oxford." [25] It is not strange, I think, but rather to be expected that a young man so certain of the rectitude of his own choices and so intolerant of those of others, at the age of eighteen, should not have been "guided—by those upon whom," asserts Hogg, "fully and without reservation, that most solemn and sacred obligation had been imposed." [26] It is a difficult matter for a university to play the role of "a kind nursing mother" to a youth who successively showed himself, at Sion House, Eton, and Oxford, not only a rebel against authority, but an inveterate foe of some of the most deeply-rooted beliefs and traditions of those institutions. By the exercise of the largest Christian charity, perhaps, Shelley

[24] *Ibid.* i. 86–7.

[25] Letter from Keswick. January 10, 1812. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 56.

[26] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 133.

might have been forgiven his radicalisms; might have been coaxed, petted, and pampered in the hope that he would alter his views and his way of life to accord with the generality of his day among the students. I do not believe that such a policy would in the least have altered his ideas or his conduct. Nor do I think that had this change been brought about, it would have been an altogether fortunate one for us who read Shelley's works for this very note of rebellion, of dissatisfaction sometimes with real, sometimes with imagined wrongs in the state, or in the mind of man; and while it might have purged him of some heresies, it is conceivable that it might also have quenched that flame-like spirit whose song at its clearest is most like that of his own skylark

> Singing hymns unbidden
> Till the world is wrought
> To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.[27]

When he had grown a little older, and had seen something more of the world, Shelley himself looked back on his own views not without amazement. From Bracknell, March 16, 1814, he wrote Hogg, "I am much changed from what I was. I look with regret to our happy evenings at Oxford, and with wonder at the hopes which in the excess of my madness I there encouraged." [28]

Towards the members of the Oxford faculty Shelley seems never to have been drawn either by their erudition or the charm of their personalities. From the first lecture hour in mineralogy Bysshe returned gloomily, only to report to Hogg that the instructor had talked "About stones!—stones, stones, stones;—nothing but stones!—and so drily. It was wonder-

[27] *Ode To a Skylark.* ll. 37–9.
[28] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 515.

fully tiresome." [29] Nor did his tutor impress him more favorably. "They are very dull people here," he declared to Hogg. "A little man sent for me this morning, and told me that I must read. 'You must read,' he said many times in his small voice. I answered that I had no objection. He persisted, so, to satisfy him, for he did not appear to believe me, I told him I had some books in my pocket, and I began to take them out. He stared at me, and said that was not exactly what he meant. 'You must read *Prometheus Vinctus*, and Demosthenes *de Corona*, and Euclid.' 'Must I read Euclid?' I asked sorrowfully. 'Yes, certainly; and when you have read the Greek works I have mentioned, you must begin Aristotle's Ethics, and then you may go on to his other treatises. It is of the utmost importance to be well acquainted with Aristotle.' This he repeated so often that I was quite tired, and at last I said, 'Must I care about Aristotle? What if I do not mind Aristotle?' I then left him, for he seemed to be in great perplexity." [30] Yet Hogg testifies that in fact Shelley "took the scholastic logic very kindly, seized its distinctions with his accustomed quickness, felt a keen interest in the study, and patiently endured the exposition" of its "minute discriminations." [31]

Hogg's egotism, or his forgetfulness, might lead his readers to infer that Shelley had no other friend at Oxford but himself. But this is, of course, not true, for we have a letter of Walter Halliday (which Hogg prints) [32] to establish that when Shelley left Oxford, a few months later, he called on his old Eton schoolmate to bid him goodbye. The farewell neces-

[29] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 58.
[30] *Ibid.* i. 97.
[31] *Ibid.* i. 97–8.
[32] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 44.

sarily presumes a previous intimacy of the two Eton friends at Oxford. Halliday may have been one of the "two Etonians" described by Hogg as having called on Shelley as they were wont to do, but as Hogg neither names them, describes them, or gives us any other indication that Shelley had other friends at Oxford; and devotes his whole attention to his own discourses with Shelley, he leaves us to conclude that no other Oxford undergraduates were on terms of close intimacy with the poet. Furthermore, Shelley seems to have been known, at least, to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, poet—and later collaborator, with Walter Scott, in the *Ballad Book*, 1824—of Christ Church College, Oxford. Sharpe's *Metrical Legends*, published at Oxford in 1807, were in the Lewisian manner so much beloved by Shelley at this time; and the five young poets would naturally have been drawn together by common tastes and interest in creation. We have,[33] in addition, proof that Sharpe later (in 1811) introduced Shelley into Edinburgh society. And now, for the first time, by the gracious courtesy of Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer, who owns the original holographs of these letters, I am able to reveal another friendship of Shelley's belonging to this period, which is recorded in two brief but friendly notes to James Roe,[34] of Trinity College. Both letters are undated. The first refers perhaps to one of the poems published in the *Margaret Nicholson* volume. The second affords, so far as I know, the only evidence that Shelley who, through most of his life, was a confirmed "tee-to-taller,"

[33] *Letters from and to C. K. Sharpe.* 1888. i. 497–8; *The Athenæum.* Feb. 11, 1921. p. 163; and *The Nation and Athenæum*, April 16, 1921. p. 91.

[34] The following record of this youth, in Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*, is communicated to me by my friend, Mr. Strickland Gibson, Assistant Librarian, the Bodleian Library:

"Roe, James, son of James, of Pembroke (Town), gentleman. Trinity College, matriculated 31 Oct. 1809, aged 18; B.A. 1815."

was certainly not averse to serving wine, and perhaps drinking it, at Oxford.

These new letters read as follows:

Dear Roe

Can you send me that poetical scrap, I left with you as I have some ideas about finishing it today

Yours
P. B. Shelley.

[Addressed]

—— Roe. Esqr.

Dear Roe

At ½ past 4 or 5 oclock there will be wine & Poetry in my room. Will you honor me with your Co.

Your devoted
Percy Shelley

½ 2 oClock
[Addressed]
—— Roe. Esqr.
Trinity College

Shelley's bent toward metaphysics asserted itself at Oxford. Together he and Hogg read and discussed Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*,[35] Hume's *Essays*,[36] Dugald Stewart's *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*,[37] an English version of M. Dacier's French text of the Platonic *Dialogues*, Floyer Sydenham's translation of Plato's *Republic*, several of Thomas Taylor's translations of the *Dialogues of Plato*,[38] and the Abbé

[35] Cf. Note to *Queen Mab*, vii. 135–6; Shelley's footnote.

[36] Cf. Note to *Queen Mab*, vii. 135–6; Shelley's footnote.

[37] Cf. Shelley's footnote, *Refutation of Deism. Prose Works of Shelley.* 1880. ii. 62.

[38] Cf. Hogg, i. 192. And see Shelley's copy of Taylor's *Crito, Parmenides and Cratylus* recovered for the Bodleian Library in 1920.

Barruel's *Memoirs of the History of Jacobinism* (translated by Clifford).[39] Besides these, Hogg informs us that Shelley read, at Oxford, "relations of travellers in the East," including, probably, Sir William Jones' *Poems*,[40] other dialogues of Plato in the original Greek, the works of Plutarch,[41] Landor's *Gebir*,[42] Shakespeare and the Attic tragedians, particularly Euripides, and that he amused himself by turning the prose of Livy or Sallust into Latin heroic or elegiac verse.

How constantly Shelley was buried in reading one may gauge from Hogg's assertion that "He was to be found, book in hand, at all hours; reading in season and out of season; at table, in bed, and especially during a walk; not only in the quiet country, and in retired paths; not only in Oxford, in the public walks, and High Street, but in the most crowded thoroughfares of London.—It is no exaggeration to affirm, that out of the twenty-four hours, he frequently read sixteen. —I sometimes thought that he carried it to a pernicious ex-

[39] Cf. Hogg, ii. 188; letter to Leigh Hunt, March 2, 1811, *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt.* i. 52–3; letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Feb. 27, 1812, *Letters from Percy Bysshe Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener,* 249–50. The original holograph in the British Museum reads "Jacobinism" not "Jacobitism" as in Dobell's edition.

[40] Cf. Koeppel, E. "Shelley's *Queen Mab* and Sir William Jones' *Palace of Fortune.*" *Englische Studien.* 28. 43–53. *The Palace of Fortune,* in vol. ii. pp. 147–166, of the *Poetical Works of Sir William Jones* (2 vols. 1810) had undoubtedly been read by Shelley before writing the description of Mab's palace. *Queen Mab,* 29–39; and there are other obvious debts owing to Jones in the same work of Shelley's youth. Shelley must have read some of Jones's poems before June 11, 1811, when, in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, he refers to "the true style of Hindoostanish devotion"; and certainly before June 21st in that year he must have read Jones's *Hymn to Camdeo;* for see his letter of that date to Miss Hitchener, in which he says: "Had I *then* been sacrificing at the altar of the Indian *Camdeo*" etc. *Letters,* i. 93, 103.

[41] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 192.

[42] *Ibid.* ii. 188.

cess: I am sure—that I was unable to keep pace with him." [43] Even "at his meals a book lay by his side, on the table, open. Tea and toast were often neglected; his author, seldom; his mutton and potatoes might grow cold; his interest in a work never cooled.—He took a volume to bed with him, and read as long as his candle lasted; he then slept—impatiently, no doubt—until it was light, and—recommenced reading at the early dawn.—In consequence of this great watching, and of almost incessant reading, he would often fall asleep in the day-time—dropping off in a moment—like an infant." [44] The habits of the insatiable student never left Shelley. In Italy Trelawny watched him as "He set to work on a book, or a pyramid of books; his eyes glistening with an energy as fierce as that of the most sordid gold-digger who works at a rock of quartz, crushing his way through all impediments, no grain of the pure ore escaping his eager scrutiny. I called on him one morning at ten, he was in his study with a German folio open, resting on the broad marble mantel-piece, over an old-fashioned fire-place, and with a dictionary in his hand. He always read standing if possible.—I then rode to Leghorn, —and passed the day there; on returning at six in the evening—I went into the Poet's room and found him exactly in the same position in which I had left him in the morning, but looking pale and exhausted." [45]

No one who has read, with any knowledge of sources, the least of Shelley's works, would venture to question this well-supported evidence of Shelley's wide reading. Wordsworth isolated himself from crowded humanity that he might find a balsam for its wounds; and the record of his search through

[43] *Ibid.* i. 125–6.
[44] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 28–9.
[45] Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* pp. 60–1.

the length and breadth of the English Lakeland is the heritage of a grateful world. Shelley, never quite divorcing himself from humanity—though he, too, loved solitude—won to such truth as he ultimately knew less by observation of men in the world than by an eager perusal of the thoughts of those men who by his day were well out of it. No doubt the charge, often leveled at the characters of his imaginings, that they are but "the shadows of the dream" of life, is based upon the fact that so great a part of his knowledge of the living sprang from the utterances of the kingly dead. Had Shelley never attended Oxford, he must have been the same, an eager, inquiring spirit unsatisfied until he had drained the very dregs of Truth. "He was, indeed, a whole university in himself to me," avers Hogg, "in respect to the stimulus and incitement which his example afforded to my love of study, and he amply atoned for the disappointment I had felt on my arrival at Oxford." [46] In the account Trelawny gives of Shelley's amazing coolness at the prospect of death by drowning, Shelley's attitude toward learning is well summed up. One day the poet, who was unable to swim, was so spurred on by envy of Trelawny, whose prowess in the art he had beheld with admiration, that he plunged after him into a deep pool in the Arno. "Immediately he sank like lead," and—lay stretched out on the bottom like a conger eel, not making the least struggle to save himself. "He would have drowned," continues Trelawny, "if I had not instantly fished him out. When he recovered his breath, he said: 'I always find the bottom of the well, and they say Truth lies there. In another minute I should have found it, and you would have found an empty shell.'" [47]

[46] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 72.

[47] Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*. pp. 58–9.

Thus indefatigably, and with "little fear and less surprise" [48] he probed the minds of all the ages and would have forced Death itself

> . . . to render up the tale
> Of what we are.[49]

Shelley's abstraction in the thought of the volumes he loved furnished Hogg with one of the most frequently-quoted stories of his friend's life at Oxford:

One Sunday we had been reading Plato together so diligently, that the usual hour of exercise passed away unperceived: we sallied forth hastily to take the air for half an hour before dinner. In the middle of Magdalen Bridge we met a woman with a child in her arms. Shelley—with abrupt dexterity—caught hold of the child. The mother, who might well fear that it was about to be thrown over the parapet of the bridge into the sedgy waters below, held it fast by its long train.

"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he asked, in a piercing voice, and with a wistful look.

The mother made no answer, but perceiving that Shelley's object was not murderous, but altogether harmless,—dismissed her apprehension, and relaxed her hold.

"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he repeated, with unabated earnestness.

"He cannot speak, Sir," said the mother seriously.

"Worse and worse," cried Shelley with an air of deep disappointment, shaking his long hair most pathetically about his young face; "but surely the babe can speak if he will, for he is only a few weeks old. He may fancy perhaps that he cannot, but it is only a silly whim; he cannot have forgotten entirely the use of speech in so short a time; the thing is absolutely impossible."

"It is not for me to dispute with you, Gentlemen," the woman

[48] *Mask of Anarchy*, 345.
[49] *Alastor*, 28–9.

meekly replied, her eye glancing at our academical garb; "but I can safely declare that I never heard him speak, nor any child, indeed, of his age."

The mother and child then being permitted, by the disappointed Platonist, to proceed on their way, Shelley ejaculated to Hogg:

"How provokingly close are those new-born babes! but it is not the less certain, notwithstanding the cunning attempts to conceal the truth, that all knowledge is reminiscence: the doctrine is far more ancient than the times of Plato, and as old as the venerable allegory that the Muses are the daughters of Memory; not one of the nine was ever said to be the child of Invention!" [50]

Long hours of study, and perhaps also the depressing effect of the Oxford atmosphere would prevail over Shelley's powers of resistance in the evenings, and from six to ten he would lie curled up like a kitten before the open fireplace in his room, while Hogg, looking up occasionally from the perusal of some text book or other, would marvel that in the intense heat so very near the flaming logs his friend was not consumed. "Sometimes," he says, "I have interposed some shelter, but rarely with any permanent effect; for the sleeper usually contrived to turn himself, and to roll again into the spot where the fire glowed the brightest." At the end of four hours of "sweet and mighty oblivion—he would start up, and rubbing his eyes with great violence, and passing his fingers swiftly through his long hair, would enter at once into a vehement argument, or begin to recite verses, either of his own composition or from the works of others, with a rapidity and an energy that were often quite painful." [51]

[50] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 239–241.

[51] *Ibid.* i. 77. Cf. also Mary Shelley's account of Shelley's composing *The Cenci* in a conservatory at the top of their house, the Villa Valsovano, near

On such an occasion Shelley may have declaimed some of the verse that was gathered into the only edition of poems he printed during his Oxford residence—*The Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson.*[52] This 22-page quarto, published about Nov. 15, 1810,[53] as the work of this poor washerwoman (who had attempted to assassinate George III in 1786) under the alleged editorship of her nephew, "John Fitzvictor,"[54] contains six poems compounded of jacobinism, demonology, and romance. Tyranny and war, the French Revolution, ghosts, and spirits of the elements, and two disappointed lovers, furnished Shelley with themes already familiar to readers of the preceding *juvenilia.* Slight as the volume is, there is in it an undeniable advance in technique over the *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire.* Shelley was freeing himself from his models as he had not attempted to do in the preceding volume of verse; and the gain to the collection is evident.

The first poem, which is allowed to go begging for a title, voices the denunciations of his king by a dying soldier, and of God by a soldier's widow. To the latter Shelley replies, defending the Deity:

> . . . he never bade the war-note swell,
> He never triumph'd in the work of hell—

Leghorn, where "the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other." *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* 1839. ii. 275–6.

[52] Mr. Forman believes that Hogg's account of this work (*Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 260 seq.) is "certainly inaccurate in some points that can be checked by reference to the book itself"; and that "this shows that his memory was not to be trusted implicitly." *Shelley Library.* 1886. p. 10.

[53] An advertisement of the volume appeared in the *Oxford University and City Herald,* November 17, 1810.

[54] "Fitzvictor"—i. e. the "son of Victor," seems to refer to Shelley's pseudonym in the *Victor and Cazire* volume which immediately preceded the *Posthumous Fragments.*

Monarchs of earth! thine is the hateful deed,
Thine are the crimes for which thy subjects bleed.

The rhyming couplets of this piece are characteristically Popeian in precision, epigrammatic point, and rhythm. But in the *Fragment, Supposed to be an Epithalamium of Francis Ravaillac and Charlotte Cordé*, various measures and stanzas of varying length obtain. Nine-line stanzas (lines 1–8, five-foot; line 9, six-foot or Alexandrine) open it, and predominate throughout; but no less than six other stanza-forms are employed. One of these beginning

But a heavenly sleep

utilizes the measure and stanza of the preceding juvenile lines on the tabby-cat, already quoted. The poet describes such a flight through the air as was later taken by Ianthe, at the bidding of Mab: [55]

Methought enthron'd upon a silvery cloud,
Which floated 'mid a strange and brilliant light,
My form upborne by viewless æther rode,
And spurn'd the lessening realms of earthly night.
What heavenly notes burst on my ravish'd ears,
What beauteous spirits met my dazzled eye!
Hark! louder swells the music of the spheres,
More clear the forms of speechless bliss float by,
And heavenly gestures suit æthereal melody.

The first "Chorus of Spirits" to appear in Shelley's poems is introduced in this *Fragment*, the closing lines of their song being:

Let love shed on the bosom a tear,
And dissolve the chill ice-drop of woe,

[55] *Queen Mab*. i. 199 ff.

Who attempted to assassinate George III, August 2, 1786. She was subsequently confined to Bedlam as a lunatic.

an idea developed about the same time (1810) by Shelley in another poem of five stanzas, entitled: *On an Icicle that Clung to the Grass of a Grave.*[56] In praise of Ravaillac Shelley gives us three lines whose construction and expression is a far echo of his method at the close of *Prometheus Unbound:* [57]

> To laugh at sorrow in secure despair,
> To mock, with smiles, life's lingering control,
> And triumph 'mid the griefs that round thy fate did roll.

Unless Shelley was endeavoring to throw Graham off the scent, we must believe the statement, conveyed in a letter to his friend, Nov. 30, 1810, that "The part of the Epithalamium —(from the end of Satan's triumph) is the production of a friend's *mistress,*" and those who, admiring Shelley's best, would wish his poem to be as free from objectionable elements as possible, will not hasten to disprove Shelley's disclaimer. For the song of Francis to Charlotte, beginning:

> Soft, my dearest angel stay

as well as her reply, offend against good taste. The poem ends with lines suggestive by anticipation of Jupiter's dethronement by Demogorgon [58] and the wails of the fallen deity:

> . . . what is sweeter to revenge's ear
> Than the fell tyrant's last expiring yell?

[56] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 160–1. The title was not given by Hogg, but is derived from the Esdaile MS. Notebook.

[57] iv. 570–8.

[58] *Prometheus Unbound.* iii. i. 84; and cf. also Shelley's letter to Hogg, Jan. 3, 1811: "Oh! how I wish I were the avenger!—that it were mine to crush the demon; to hurl him to his native hell, never to rise again, and thus to establish forever perfect and universal toleration. I expect to gratify some of this insatiable feeling in poetry." Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 156. See also letter to Hogg, Dec. 26, 1810: "I even now by anticipation hear the expiring yell of intolerance." Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 150.

Yes! than love's sweetest blisses 'tis more dear
To drink the floatings of a despot's knell.[59]

In *Despair,* the heart-broken lover, whose affection has not been returned, reproaches all Nature because it does not show instant signs of sympathy with the tumult in his breast, and then pleads that the wild elements shall be loosed upon him to

Destroy this life or let earth's fabric be no more.

The first four lines of the concluding stanza,

Yes! every tie that links me here is dead;
Mysterious fate thy mandate I obey,
Since hope and peace and joy, for aye are fled,
I come, terrific power, I come away,

remind us of the better known lines: *Stanzas.—April 1814,* and the fifth stanza of "Oh! there are spirits of the air" (1816); while the closing vow of the poet to meet torture unhesitatingly,

Cursing the power that ne'er made aught in vain,

show him in open rebellion against the Creator. To this poem, the next, entitled *Fragment,* forms a sort of sequel; for its theme, too, is the despair of a forsaken lover, and line and stanza are metrically the same—nine-line, arranged as in the Ravaillac-Cordé *Epithalamium* heretofore examined. But it is interesting for another reason; in it we are introduced for the first time to that maniac who, as an objectified portrait of himself, Shelley again presents in *Julian and Maddalo* (1818).

I met a maniac, like he was to me,
I said—"Poor victim wherefore dost thou roam?"

[59] And compare Southey's *Thalaba,* xii. 259–77. Shelley had read and admired this poem.

—thus runs the description of the madman's début; and thus Maddalo (Byron) speaks of him to Julian (Shelley) eight years later:

> . . . I knew one like you
> Who . . .
> Is now gone mad . . .
> Poor fellow! . . .[60]

The mark of the Gothic romancers and of Ossian is upon *The Spectral Horseman,* the next poem in the volume; and this poem together with *The Melody to a Scene of Former Times,* which, as has been noted, helps us to fix the date of the beginning of Shelley's romance with Harriet Grove, exhibit an apparent reversion of style to his earlier manner. There is nothing in either deserving of special remark; and the second is important only as evidence that his romance had indeed come to an end, leaving Shelley desolate. This unhappy issue is chronicled in letters from Shelley to Hogg during the Christmas vacation, 1810–11.

"In the course of that summer, [i. e., 1810]" wrote Charles Grove, many years later, "a continual correspondence was going on, as I believe, there had been before, between Bysshe and my sister Harriet. But she became uneasy at the tone of his letters on speculative subjects, at first consulting my mother, and subsequently my father also on the subject. This led at last to the dissolution of an engagement between Bysshe and my sister, which had previously been permitted, both by his father and mine."[61] Some of Shelley's letters to Hogg have

[60] *Julian and Maddalo.* 195–9. In the eighth volume of his set of Xenophon's *Works,* Shelley wrote on a fly-leaf "Definition of Madness [p.] 239" showing that a reference made to the subject by Xenophon had caught his attention.

[61] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 551.

been lost; and I think it must have been in a letter antedating that of Dec. 20, 1810, from Field Place, that Shelley first informed his friend of the catastrophe that had befallen.

The severance of the thread of correspondence which bound the two young people became for Shelley a new reason to make war on the religious "superstition" which had prompted Harriet and her parents to break off her communication with him. Already inclining toward scepticism, he undoubtedly endeavored to win Harriet, his sister Elizabeth,[62] the poetess Felicia Browne [63] (Hemans), and perhaps others as well to his speculative views. Hogg, in his humorous way, has attempted an explanation of the reasons why Shelley should thus have wandered away from the travelled ways of thought to which the "best society" of his day stood committed; and, as Shelley had been drawn to the marvellous side of scientific investigation, so, Hogg suggests, that "sceptical philosophy—partook of the new and the wonderful, inasmuch as it called into doubt, and seemed to place in jeopardy, during the joyous hours of disputation, many important, practical conclusions. To a soul loving excitement and change," he continued, "destruction, so that it be on a grand scale, may sometimes prove hardly less inspiring than creation." [64]

Hence, a little while after he had learned the fate of his first love affair Shelley cried out to Hogg: "O! I burn with impatience for the moment of Christianity's dissolution; it has injured me. I swear on the altar of perjured Love to revenge myself on the hated cause of the effect, which *even now* I can scarcely help deploring. Indeed, I think it is to

[62] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 150, and cf. Medwin, *Angler in Wales,* pp. 124–9.

[63] Medwin, *Revised Life of Shelley.* p. 59.

[64] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 100.

the benefit of society to destroy the opinion which can annihilate the dearest of its ties." [65] Three days later he protested further: "Where exists the moral wrong of seeking the society of one whom I loved? What offence to reason, to virtue, was there in desiring the communication of a lengthened correspondence, in order that both she and myself, might see if by coincidence of intellect we were willing to enter into a closer, an eternal union?—I know the cause of all human disappointment—worldly prejudice; mine is the same, I know also its origin,—bigotry." [66] Three days later still, he informed Hogg that his sister, Elizabeth, whom he was endeavoring to "match" with Hogg, was, in his state of "excessive unhappiness," "a great consolation" to him. Christmas came unseasonably to him, and he mourned over its "uncongenial jollities," and complained that however sad one may be, one is then "compelled to contribute to the merriment of others." [67] "What—shall happiness arise from?" he asked Hogg, in his first letter of the new year, 1811. "Can we hesitate? Love, dear love, and though every mental faculty is bewildered by the agony which is in this life its too constant attendant, still is not that very agony to be preferred to the most thrilling sensualities of epicurism?" The next sentence is illuminating: "I have wandered in the snow, for I am cold, wet, and mad." [68] Was ever wrath thus vented before?

"She is no longer mine!—she abhors me as a skeptic, as what *she* was before! Oh, bigotry!—I am afraid there is

[65] Letter to Hogg, Dec. 20, 1810, first correctly published, from the original holograph, by M. A. Koszul, Esq., in the Appendix to his *La Jeunesse de Shelley*. 1910. p. 408.

[66] Letter to Hogg, Dec. 23, 1810. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 146–8.

[67] Letter to Hogg, Dec. 28, 1810. *Ibid.* i. 151.

[68] Letter to Hogg, Jan. 2, 1811. *Ibid.* i. 153–4.

selfishness in the passion of love, for I cannot avoid feeling every instant as if my soul was bursting; but I *will* feel no more! It is selfish. I would feel for others, but for myself —oh! how much rather would I expire in the struggle! Yes, there were a relief! Is suicide wrong? I slept with a loaded pistol and some poison, last night, but did not die."[69] These exclamations, garnered from the next letter to Hogg, indicate to what romancings the termination of the Shelley-Grove correspondence had driven the young ardent lover. He next tried a defence for Harriet's change of front. "Yet I consider what a female sacrifices when she returns the attachment even of one whose faith she supposes inviolable. Hard is the agony which is indescribable, which is only to be felt. Will she not encounter the opprobrium of the world; and what is more severe (generally speaking) the dereliction and contempt of those who before had avowed themselves most attached to her?" Declaring that he had never for a moment doubted her, he yet suggested: "Still was it not *natural* in her—to have some doubts—some fears?" As for abandoning his love of her, "Never! But she is gone—she is lost to me for ever; for ever!—I followed her. I would have followed her to the end of the earth, but—If you value the little happiness which yet remains, do not mention again to me, sorrows which, if you could share in, would wound a heart, which—has already suffered." "I will crush Intolerance" he continues, boldly. "I will, at least, attempt it.—I have been most of the night pacing a churchyard."[70]

But heavier than the news that his correspondence with Harriet had been discontinued were the tidings conveyed to Hogg on the 11th of January—less than a week later. "She

[69] Letter to Hogg, Jan. 3, 1811. *Ibid.* i. 156–7.
[70] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 158–161.

is gone! She is lost to me for ever! She married! Married to a clod of earth; [71] she will become as insensible herself; all those fine capabilities will moulder! Let us speak no more on the subject. Do not deprive me of the little remains of peace which yet linger; that which arises from endeavors to make others happy!" [72]

Solace for his wounds was not far to seek; for probably during the first fortnight of January,[73] he was introduced by his sister Mary to her schoolfellow, Harriet Westbrook, at her home, 23 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square, and he afterward called on her, in company with his cousin, Charles Grove. A correspondence immediately ensued. On the 11th Shelley directed Stockdale to send the new Harriet a copy of *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian,* his second and last novel, which was wholly or practically completed while he was still at Eton,[74] but not published until the latter part of January 1811.

[71] Shelleyan for *farmer.* But though Harriet Grove may have become engaged to Mr. Heylar, she did not actually marry him until October 1811.

[72] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 163–4.

[73] *Ibid.* ii. 552.

[74] See his letter to Edward Graham, April 1, 1810, first correctly published by the writer in the *Athenæum,* July 30, 1920.

INTERCHAPTER II

The Sources and Significance of St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian

"*St. Irvyne,*" says Mr. Hughes, to whose capable analysis of Shelley's dependence, in *Zastrozzi,* upon *Zofloya, or the Moor* I have referred in the Appendix, "uses up the supernatural element from Mrs. Byrne's book which was left out of *Zastrozzi,* and adds the motive of the *elixir vitæ* from St. Leon." [75] Like Abellino in Monk Lewis' *Bravo of Venice,*[76] and Zofloya in *Zofloya, or the Moor,* Ginotti, the hero of *St. Irvyne,* is of commanding stature, great strength, and marked reserve, and carries with him an air of authority. In his youth, abandoning his faith in God, he made a pact with the Devil and tried the *elixir vitæ.* For this last cause he, like the Wandering Jew, must live eternally unless he can convey the secret to another being. The individual to whom he purposes to reveal the formula of the "wine of life" is Wolfstein, a nobleman's son who in the manner of Abellino has left a good home and entered into partnership with the band of brigands in which Ginotti is a power. Ginotti for his own secret purposes permits Wolfstein to escape the consequences of the murder of Cavigni, the robber's chief, and to flee with the beautiful prisoner Megalena to Genoa. There the two lead a life of dissipation. Wolfstein's love for Megalena gradually cools; he meets the fair Olympia della Anzasca, who conceives a passion for him, and one day Megalena finds Olympia in

[75] *St. Leon,* by William Godwin. pub. 1799.

[76] *The Bravo of Venice, A Romance.* Translated from the German by M. G. Lewis, Fifth Edition, London. 1807.

Wolfstein's arms. Enraged, Megalena conducts Wolfstein to their apartment and demands that he murder Olympia. Wolfstein enters Olympia's chamber at night, intending to consummate the crime, but is deterred from the act by her beauty. She wakes, questions him on the subject of his affection for her, and learning that he is "irrevocably, indissolubly another's" commits suicide by means of the dagger Wolfstein had cast aside when overcome by her loveliness. Wolfstein flees to Megalena, and at once, fearing the pursuit of the officers of justice, they leave Genoa together. Ginotti appears to Wolfstein in the most mysterious manner, warning him that he must soon receive a great secret, upon imparting which his own (Ginotti's) soul will "rest in annihilation." At the ruined abbey of St. Irvyne, Wolfstein, who has received Ginotti's secret, meets the latter and is asked by him to deny God. Wolfstein refuses. Satan rises out of the earth and Ginotti and Wolfstein are prostrated. Ginotti, dead to all things earthly, must prolong in hell the eternity of existence he had obtained by unholy means. Shelley seems to have intended that both Ginotti and Wolfstein should in fact perish in this scene, but that Wolfstein, because he would not deny God, should not have to share Ginotti's punishment.

Into *St. Irvyne* another story is injected, without any apparent connection between itself and the Wolfstein-Ginotti story. Eloise de St. Irvyne returns, an abandoned outcast, to her parental estates, which she had left six years previously. The story of her intermediate sufferings is related; but curiously enough Shelley forgets his own beginning, and at the end of the narrative marries Eloise off and does not bring her back to St. Irvyne's Castle.

Eloise, travelling from St. Irvyne to Geneva with her mother, who was slowly dying, meets Nempere, an attractive

fellow, at a solitary cottage by the way. Her mother dies. Nempere first seduces Eloise and then sells her to Mountfort, an Englishman of noble birth, who treats her with respect. In the home of her new owner she meets Fitzeustace, with whom she becomes enamoured. As she sleeps, she murmurs of her love for him, and he overhears her. The Englishman slays Nempere in a duel, and escapes to England, whither the lovers, Eloise and Fitzeustace, follow him.

At the end of the story we are told that "Nempere is Ginotti, Eloise is the sister of Wolfstein." Now, as Stockdale pointed out to Shelley, if Ginotti is Nempere, he dies twice. In reply Shelley explained: "You will perceive that Mountfort physically did kill Ginotti, which must appear from the latter's paleness." [77] This does not solve the difficulty; and not even Stockdale's tinkering—he seems to have "fitted" the story "for the press" [78]—could rescue its termination, and much of its execution, from absurdity.[79]

I have already made mention [80] of Shelley's boyish rambles into St. Leonard's Forest, near Field Place, in the county of Sussex. I think that he had these wanderings in mind when he wrote, in *Zastrozzi:* [81]

> It was his custom, during those hours when the twilight of evening cools the air, to wander through the adjacent rich scenery, though he seldom prolonged his walks till midnight.

The very verb *wander* which he invariably employs with reference to these woodland strolls depicts Shelley as a lad slowly

[77] Letter from Shelley to Stockdale, Nov. 19, 1810. *Letters.* i. 14.

[78] Letter from Shelley to Stockdale, Nov. 14, 1810. *Letters.* i. 13.

[79] I have made use, in the discussion of *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne,* of Allene Gregory's summaries of their plots, in her able study, *The French Revolution and the English Novel,* 1915. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

[80] In chapter i.

[81] *Zastrozzi* v.

drinking in, as he walked, the wonders of the Sussex forests. And sometimes the memory of a dear companion of these walks crossed his mind, as when he tells us that Verezzi

. . . felt a soft, a tender and ecstatic emotion of regret, when retrospection portrayed the blissful time long since gone by, while, happy in the society of her whom he idolized, he thought he could never be otherwise than then, enjoying the sweet, the serene delights of association of a congenial mind; [82] he often now amused himself in retracing with his pencil, from memory, scenes which, though in his Julia's society he had beheld unnoticed, yet were now hallowed by the remembrance of her; for he always associated the idea of Julia with the remembrance of those scenes which she had so often admired, and where, accompanied by her, he had so often wandered.[83]

Retrospection likewise summoned up the remembrance of that "favorite soft air" [84] which Harriet had loved. Years later Captain Kennedy remembered that Shelley in 1814 had [85]

played several times on the piano with one hand, . . . an exceedingly simple air, which . . . his earliest love was wont to play for him.[86]

Thus early the autobiographic element always prominent in the later work, asserted itself in Shelley's compositions, the recording of which brought him

. . . that ecstatic, that calm and serene delight, only experienced by the innocent, and which is excited by a return to the place where we have spent our days of infancy,[87]

[82] Throughout the juvenile novels it is "congeniality of sentiment" which is insisted upon as the keynote of true love. Cf. *St. Irvyne iii,* for one instance.

[83] *Zastrozzi.* viii.

[84] *Ibid.* vi.

[85] In 1813.

[86] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 549–550; *Queen Mab.* ii. 170–2; *Julian and Maddalo.* 273 ff. and *Prometheus Unbound.* II. iv. 12–18.

[87] *Zastrozzi.* x.

even though that delight be not unmixed with sadness arising from thoughts of how the

. . . years, which have changed the tenour of our existence, have changed even the friend, the dear friend, for whose sake alone the landscape lives in the memory, for whose sake tears flow at each varying feature of the scenery [scenes not reviewed since] he saw them with the being who was dear to him! [88]

The song of the nightingale echoes the sadness of the poet's heart, who listens remembering that he before had heard

such strains as these . . . with that friend, . . . with one he loves:

and sitting down on a rock overlooking a lake, he counts

. . . in mournful review that days which are past since they fled so quickly with one who was dear to him.[89]

In the midst of Nature's panoply of form and color and sound he alone is poor, for his soul

wants . . . the union of another, of whom the feelings are in unison with his own, to constitute almost insupportable delight.[90]

Years pass, and Shelley, first in the society of Harriet Westbrook, afterwards with Mary Godwin, and from time to time with that of other women who might have been all in all to another less exacting man, seeks to recapture that congenial delight forever present to his memory, forever eluding him after the fatal break of the winter of 1810. He cannot match it; he cannot win the rapture itself; and balked and defeated in his quest the seeker writes:

[88] *St. Irvyne.* vii.
[89] *Ibid.* ix.
[90] *St. Irvyne* xii.

Like the ghost of a dear friend dead
Is Time long past.
A tone which is now forever fled,
A hope which is now forever past,
A love so sweet it could not last,
Was Time long past.[91]

Deep-rooted and enduring was the love Shelley bore for Harriet Grove, a love born of his conviction that where there was so much loveliness,[92] truth and constancy in love must also be, and that in her companionship more truly than in that of any other could he attain to that perfect union of sense and sensibility for which Dante and Petrarch longed and which even in Harriet Grove Shelley could never have fully realized.[93] Mr. Thomas Hardy has written down the essence of the poet's position in *Jude the Obscure*, in which Richard Phillotson, speaking to his friend, George Gillingham, of Sue's love for Jude, says:

". . . Their supreme desire is to be together,—to share each other's emotions, and fancies, and dreams."

"Platonic!" (replies Gillingham).

"Well no, Shelleyan would be nearer to it. They remind me of Laon and Cythna."

And although ultimately, if we can accept the evidence of certain lines in the *Epipsychidion*,[94] Shelley turned from his single-hearted devotion to this early love, there can be no question that for more than a decade that love was one of the

[91] *Time Long Past. Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (ed. Rossetti) ii. 260.

[92] *Epipsychidion* II. 190–216.

[93] One reason, probably, for the fascination of her memory for him in after years was that he had never gone on to disillusionment with her.

[94] II. 42 seq.

most powerful forces in his life; and that he has himself left us in abundance direct proof of this fact.[95] The wonder only is that his biographers have made so little use of his confessions.

Turning now to the record, furnished by the novels, of Shelley's mental evolution up to this time, we may discover such an account as, supplemented by the much-quoted letter to Godwin,[96] will afford us a fairly comprehensive notion of the growth of his mind. Thus Ginotti narrates his story to Wolfstein:

> From my earliest youth, before it was quenched by complete satiation, *curiosity*, and a desire of unveiling the latent mysteries of nature, was the passion by which all the other emotions of my mind were intellectually organized. This desire first led me to cultivate, and with success, the various branches of learning which led to the gates of wisdom. I then applied myself to the cultivation of philosophy, and the éclat with which I pursued it, exceeded my most sanguine expectations.—Natural philosophy . . . became the peculiar science to which I directed my eager inquiries; thence was I led into a train of labyrinthic meditations. I thought of death—I shuddered when I reflected, and shrank in horror from the idea . . . of entering a new existence to which I was a stranger. I must either dive into the recesses of futurity, or I must not, I cannot die. "Will not this nature—will not the *matter* of which it is composed—exist to all eternity? Oh! I know it will; and, by the exertions of the energies with which nature has gifted me, well I know it shall." This was my opinion at that time: I then believed that there existed no God. Ah! at what an exorbitant price have I bought the conviction that there is one!!! Believing that priestcraft and superstition were all the religion which *man* ever practiced, it could not be supposed that

[95] Cf. *Julian and Maddalo*. 589 ff.

[96] From Keswick, Jan. 10, 1812. *Letters from Percy Bysshe Shelley to William Godwin*. 2 vols. pr. pr. London. 1891. i. 8–15.

I thought there existed supernatural beings of any kind. I believed *nature* to be self-sufficient and excelling; I supposed not, therefore, that there could be anything beyond nature.

I was now about seventeen: I had dived into the depths of metaphysical calculations. With sophistical arguments had I convinced myself of the nonexistence of a First Cause, and, by every combined modification of the essence of matter, had I apparently proved that no existence could possibly be, unseen by human vision.

At length, after several vicissitudes, he is compelled to admit

. . . the existence of a superior and beneficent spirit, in whose image is made the soul of man.[97]

So the curious young investigator proceeded, as we have seen, from experiments with Leyden jars,[98] and spirit-invocation,[99] from wanderings in churchyards at dead of night [100] and tarryings in charnel-houses and on coffins,[101] from blowing up boundary-palings and school-desks [102] and setting fire to trees with gun-powder and burning-glass,[103] by the route of the "ghostly wonders" furnished by metrical spectre tales,[104] Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Byrne, and "Monk" Lewis, through seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy—the works of Locke, Hume, Reid, and Spinoza—until he arrived at last in the arms of the "ridiculous philosopher" [105] of Skinner Street, London—William Godwin.

Now as the effect upon Shelley of reading Godwin's treatise

[97] *St. Irvyne.* x.

[98] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* i. 30–1.

[99] *Alastor.* 26–29.

[100] Letter to Hogg, Jan. 6, 1811. Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* i. 161.

[101] *Alastor* 23–5; and Hogg, *Life of Shelley* i. 33–4.

[102] John Rennie, *Autobiography* 1–2.

[103] John T. Coleridge, review of *Revolt of Islam* in *Quarterly Review* No. xlii. Sept. 1819. 460–471. Coleridge was a schoolfellow of Shelley at Eton.

[104] *St. Irvyne* ii.

[105] See note 93, ch. vi.

is of great importance to a proper understanding of Shelley's life and work, let us inquire into his statement as to the precise time at which he first encountered it. In his second letter, already quoted, to Godwin from Keswick, January 10, 1812, Shelley asserted that "more than two years" had passed since he had picked up, for the first time, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. This, if accurate, could mean only that he had read it as early as 1809. But as in this same letter Shelley is guilty of two certain errors of chronology,[106] it seems likely that in dating his first acquaintance with Godwin's book he also erred. It is possible, of course, that he did read the book in his last year at Eton; but in a letter to Stockdale, from University College, Oxford, on November 19, 1810, Shelley requests the publisher to "have the goodness to send" him a copy of the work; and as Mr. Hughes suggests, the internal evidence of *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne* indicates a later date, 1810, for his meeting with Godwin's treatise. Mr. Hughes' argument is that the generous injection into *St. Irvyne* of Godwinian views on love and marriage, mainly missing in *Zastrozzi*, point the later date as the more probable one. Remembering, therefore, that though *Zastrozzi* was published June 5, 1810, whereas *St. Irvyne* did not appear until (approximately) December 20 in the same year, let us note the comparative prominence given to the Godwinian philosophy in the two novels.

On the same grounds that Shelley, writing to Elizabeth Hitchener to defend himself for entering into a formal marriage with Harriet Westbrook, was to take, a year later, Verezzi apologizes to Matilda for pressing such a service upon her, "though love like ours—wants not the vain ties of hu-

[106] His statement that "before the age of seventeen" he had published two novels; and that at the time of writing Godwin (Jan. 10, 1812) he was "nineteen" years old.

man laws, yet, that our love may want not any sanction which could possibly be given to it." [107] This sole reference, in a late chapter of *Zastrozzi*, glances at the Godwinian position; but it is noteworthy that Verezzi surrenders to the "superstitions" of "the corrupt and slavish multitude" [108] and in the end is legally married to Matilda. In *St. Irvyne*, however, there is no such dearth of Godwinian passages. The hapless Cavigni promises Megalena:

> . . . fair girl, thou shalt be mine—we will be wedded tomorrow, if you think the bands of love not sufficiently forcible to unite us.[109]

But Cavigni is represented as a sophister, and Megalena will not have him. Nempere, who also plays the role of a betrayer of innocence, endeavors thus to break down the "prejudices" of the stainless Eloise:

> "Why," says Nempere, "are we taught to believe that the union of two who love each other is wicked, unless authorized by certain rites —and ceremonies, which certainly cannot change the tenour of sentiments which it is destined [110] that these two people should entertain of eath other?"
>
> "It is, I suppose," answered Eloise, calmly, "because God has willed it so; besides," continued she, blushing at she knew not what, "it would——"
>
> "And is then the superior and towering soul of Eloise subjected to sentiment and prejudices so stale and vulgar as these?" interrupted Nempere indignantly. "Say, Eloise, do not you think it an insult to two souls, united to each other in the irrefragable covenants of love and congeniality, to promise, in the sight of a Being they know

[107] *Zastrozzi.* xiii.
[108] *The Assassins.* ii.
[109] *St. Irvyne.* i.
[110] Here enters the Godwinian doctrine of Necessity.

not, that fidelity which is certain otherwise? . . . Surely the adoration of two beings unfettered by restraint, must be most acceptable!" [111]

Before this flood of specious reasoning Eloise is at length forced to give way, but with the consequences already noted as being set forth in the first chapter of the novel. In the confusing issue of *St. Irvyne,* however, Eloise marries Fitzeustace, at the end of a colloquy reported by Shelley as follows (Fitzeustace is speaking):

". . . before we go to England, before my father will see us, it is necessary that we should be married—nay, do not start, Eloise; I view it in the light that you do: I consider it an human institution, and incapable of furnishing that bond of union by which alone can intellect be conjoined; I regard it as but a chain, which, although it keeps the body bound, still leaves the soul unfettered: it is not so with love. But still, Eloise, to those who think like us, it is at all events harmless; it is but yielding to the prejudices of the world wherein we live, and procuring moral expediency, at a slight sacrifice of what we conceive to be right."

"Well, well, it shall be done, Fitzeustace," resumed Eloise, "but take the assurance of my promise that I cannot love you more."

They soon agreed on a point of, in their eyes, so trifling importance, and arriving in England, tasted that happiness which love and innocence alone can give. Prejudice may triumph for awhile, but virtue will be eventually the conqueror.[112]

[111] *St. Irvyne.* ix.
[112] *St. Irvyne.* xii.

CHAPTER IV

(CONTINUED)

BUT if "virtue" did "eventually conquer" in the case of Eloise and Fitzeustace, it did not in the case of Shelley and Harriet Grove; and she who was

> a wonder of this earth,
> Like one of Shakespeare's women [113]

—one "dear," yet "false" [114] to Shelley, hardened her heart against the joint entreaties of Shelley and his sister, Elizabeth, whom he had enlisted to plead his cause. So the disappointed lover, determining to "crush the wretch" (i. e., the laws of church and state respecting marriage) which had severed him from his beloved, set about endeavoring to make others happy, and began by attempting to unite his friend Hogg to his sister Elizabeth. In letters written in that vacation which was so crowded with events of the utmost import to Shelley's whole life, the match-making author of *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian* busied himself in his self-allotted task.

I hope you will publish Leonora; [115] I shall then give a copy to Elizabeth, unless *you* forbid it. I would do it not only to tell her what your ideas are on the subject of religion, and to interest her, but that she should see you in a new point of view.[116]

[113] *Julian and Maddalo.* 590, 592.

[114] *Laon and Cythna. Canc. Dedication. pub.* Ingpen. *Shelley in England.* 520.

[115] A tale, upon which Hogg had been engaged.

[116] Letter from Field Place, Jan. 2, 1811, published correctly, *Appendix* to Koszul's *La Jeunesse de Shelley.*

Thus the campaign opened; but, though Shelley prosecuted it ardently during the early months of this year, by the 28th of April all hope of making Hogg and Elizabeth the Laon and Cythna of the millenium had failed, and Shelley found himself writing despairingly to Hogg:

She is lost, lost to everything; Intolerance has tainted her—she talks cant and twaddle. I would not venture thus to prophesy without being most perfectly convinced in my own mind of the truth of what I say. It *may* not be irretrievable; but yes, it is! A young female, who only once, only for a short time, asserted her claim to an unfettered use of reason, bred up with bigots, having before her eyes examples of the consequences of skepticism, or even of philosophy, which she must now see to lead directly to the former. A mother, who is mild and tolerant, yet narrow-minded; how, I ask, *is she* to be rescued from its influences? [117]

During the same vacation Shelley, who had upheld the idea of God or an over-ruling Providence, in his novels, but who had been dipping into Locke, Hume, Sir William Drummond, Dugald Stewart, and Spinoza, felt himself slipping from orthodoxy into belief in a First Cause which he devoutly wished might be "the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal, imperishable love!," and in a debate with Hogg on the necessity of Christianity exclaims:

Hideous, hated traits of Superstition. Oh! Bigots, how I abhor your influence; they are all bad enough—but do we not see Fanaticism decaying? is not its influence weakened, except where Faber, Rowland Hill, and several others of the Armageddon heroes maintain their posts with all the obstinacy of long-established dogmatism? How I pity them; how I despise, hate them! [118]

[117] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 350.
[118] Letter to Hogg, Jan. 12, 1811. Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* i. 170

Shortly afterwards he tries Hogg's "systematic cudgel for Christianity" on his father, but with no result save that Timothy reminded his son that he had read Locke thirty years before—a witticism which seems to have been lost on Shelley. Evidently his mother began to be alarmed at the possible result of Shelley's proselytizing his sisters, for on the 11th of January he tells Hogg:

> My mother imagines me to be in the high road to Pandemonium, she fancies I want to make a deistical coterie of all my little sisters: how laughable!

An outsider even became alarmed at Bysshe's fall from grace, and Timothy Shelley heard from Shelley's publisher, Stockdale, that his son, under the malign influence of one Thomas Jefferson Hogg, was rapidly becoming converted to atheism. The result was, variously, indignant letters from Hogg and Shelley to the publisher, and the visit of Timothy Shelley to Stockdale's establishment in Pall Mall. No doubt this unfortunate interference by Stockdale served to postpone the day of Hogg's visiting Field Place, and of his meeting the estimable Elizabeth, for he does not appear to have visited the country place of the Shelleys during the lifetime of his friend, the poet.

Denis F. MacCarthy, the indefatigable author of *Shelley's Early Life: From Original Sources*, is of the opinion that the MS. which had provoked Stockdale's intrusion, was that of the yet-unpublished pamphlet of seven pages on *The Necessity of Atheism*. This essay, appearing at length on or about February 15, from the press of C. and W. Phillips, of Worthing, was offered for sale for about twenty minutes at the Oxford shop of Munday and Slatter, and at the end of that time, as a result of the protest of an orthodox "don" of the University,

the Reverend John Walker, Fellow of New College, all the copies except one were burned. This copy Slatter kept for reference, and it is from it that our present-day text of the pamphlet is taken.

"The pamphlet," writes Mr. Percy Vaughan,[119] to whom I am indebted for the discovery of several sources of the *Necessity*, "is not an abstract of any one previous argument, but an original composition dependent on heterogeneous sources. In general there is a want of felicity in the diction, and a good deal of lax phrasing which is well in accordance with Shelley's habit of composition." Opening with a statement, after Locke,[120] of the nature of belief, the essay, pursuing in general the plan employed by Fréret,[121] and using Hume's argument of miracles instead of Fréret's—Meslieur's *Bon Sens* presents the same and other additional arguments—Shelley, as Fréret [122] had done, began by maintaining that the senses are the ultimate source of all knowledge. The argument that we can only grasp the relation of cause and effect by observing a sequence of phenomena, was derived perhaps from Hume, though it did not originate with him.[123] The final argument is that of Hume on miracles. Shelley's own reasons for writing the tract he set forth in a letter to his father, March 29, 1811:

[119] *Early Shelley Pamphlets* 19–20.

[120] *Human Understanding.* iv. I.

[121] *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe* transl. English, 1826. 63–133.

[122] And cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* I. i.; Charron, *De La Sagesse,* I. x.; Gassendi, *Institutio Logica, Pars Prima,* canon ii; Locke, *Human Understanding,* II. i.; Condillac, *Traité des Sensations,* 1754, II, 256. The doctrine was generally adopted by the French freethinkers. Cf. Helvetius, *De L'Esprit,* 1758, I, 13, 260; and Holbach, *Système de la Nature,* 1793, i. 86. (For these cross-references I am also indebted to Mr. Percy Vaughan's Study of Shelley's Early work).

[123] Cf. Glanvil, *Scepsis Scientifica,* Owen's ed., 1885, 160–181.

The case was this:—You well know that a train of reasoning and not any great profligacy has induced me to disbelieve the Scripture:—this train myself and my friend pursued, we found to our surprise that (strange as it may appear) the proofs of an existing deity were as far as we had observed defective. We therefore embodied our doubts on the subject and arranged them in the form of "The Necessity of Atheism," thinking thereby to obtain a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory answer from men who had made Divinity the study of their lives.[124]

To this end Shelley had directed a copy of the pamphlet "to every bishop in the Kingdom, to the Vice-Chancellor, and the other heads of houses in Oxford, and other dignitaries, addressing them over the fictitious signature of 'Jeremiah Stukeley.'" [125] Although the pamphlet had been issued anonymously, it must have been known by March 15, that Shelley was its author; for on that date Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who was then at Christ Church College, wrote to Charlotte Maria Campbell, later Lady Charlotte Bury:

Talking of books, we have lately had a literary Sun shine forth upon us here, before whom our former luminaries must hide their undiminished heads—a Mr. Shelley, of University College, who lives upon arsenic, aquafortis, half-an-hour's sleep in the night, and is desperately in love with the memory of Margaret Nicholson. He hath published what he terms the Posthumous Poems, printed for the benefit of Mr. Peter Finnerty,[126] which, I am grieved to say, though stuffed full of treason, is extremely dull; but the author is a great genius, and if he be not clapped up in Bedlam or hanged, will cer-

[124] First published, Ingpen, *Shelley in England* 214–215.

[125] Montgomery's *Oxford*. 3rd ed. revised. 168.

[126] So also says Henry Slatter; but there are other indications that the profits of a poem by Shelley, now lost—*A Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things* (called by Sharpe "a poem on The State of Public Affairs") were directed to the relief of the unfortunate Finnerty.

tainly prove one of the sweetest swans on the tuneful margin of the Cherwell. . . . Shelley's style is much like that of Moore burlesqued; for Frank [127] is a very foul-mouthed fellow, and Charlotte,[128] one of the most impudent brides that I ever met with in a book. *Our Apollo next came out with a prose pamphlet in praise of Atheism, which I have not as yet seen,*[129] and there appeared a monstrous Romance in one volume, called St. Ircoyne [*sic*] or the Rosicrucian. Here is another pearl of price! all the heroes are confirmed robbers and causeless murderers, while the heroines glide *en chemise* through the streets of Geneva, tap at the palazzo doors of their sweethearts, and on being denied admittance leave no cards, but run home to their warm beds, and kill themselves. If your lordship would like to see this treasure I will send it. Shelley's last exhibition is a poem on the State of Public Affairs.[130] I fear, my dear lord [lady?] you will be quite disgusted with all this stuff . . .[131]

The cremation of the *Necessity* having been attended to by Walker and the booksellers, the latter sent for Shelley, who came at once. An argument then ensued, Slatter, Munday, Walker, and "counsellor Clifford, of O.P. notoriety" arraying themselves against the beardless author who had thrown his atheistical grenade into the very citadel of the established church. He only laughed at them and would not retrench a yard.

Through her uncle, probably, Miss Elizabeth Grant became acquainted with the difficulties which, about this time, University College was experiencing with Percy Bysshe Shelley; and

[127] Francis Ravaillac in *Epithalamium of Francis Ravaillac and Charlotte Cordé,* in *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson.*

[128] Charlotte Cordé. *Ibid.*

[129] The italics are my own.

[130] Conjectured by Mr. MacCarthy to be *A Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things,* advertised in various papers as published by B. Crosby and Co., London, 1811; but of which no copy is now known.

[131] *Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.* i. 442–3.

although in her account of Shelley's departure from Oxford she erroneously asserts that Sir Timothy left Oxford with his son on that memorable Lady Day of 1811, the rest of her narrative is extremely important and deserves reprinting in full.

The ringleader in every species of mischief within our grave walls was Mr. Shelley, afterwards so celebrated, though I should think to the end half-crazy. He began his career by every kind of wild prank at Eton, and when kindly remonstrated with by his tutor, repaid the well-meant private admonition by spilling an acid over the carpet of that gentleman's study, a new purchase, which he thus completely destroyed. He did no deed so mischievous at University, but he was very insubordinate, always infringing some rule, the breaking of which he knew could not be overlooked. He was slovenly in his dress, and when spoken to about these and other irregularities, he was in the habit of making such extraordinary gestures, expressive of his humility under reproof, as to overset first the gravity, and then the temper, of the lecturing tutor. Of course these scenes reached unpleasant lengths, and when he proceeded so far as to paste up atheistical squibs on the chapel doors, it was considered necessary to expel him, privately, out of regard for Sir Timothy Shelley, the father, who, being written to concerning his wayward son, arrived in much anxiety, had a long conference with my uncle in the study; to which presently both the young man and Mr. Rowley were admitted, and then Sir Timothy and his son left Oxford together. Quiet was restored to our sober walls after this disturber of its peace had been got rid of, although some suspicious circumstances connected with the welfare of a principal favourite [131a] of my aunt's still required to be elucidated, as Mr. Rowley said, and at once checked.[132]

131a See Appendix S.

132 "Again, accident has made me aware of facts which give me to understand, that, in passing through the usual curriculum of a college life in all its paths, Shelley did not go scatheless,—but that, in the tampering with venal pleasures, his health was seriously and not transiently injured."—Thornton Hunt, "Shelley as I Knew Him," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1863, p. 193.

A little while, and the thunders of the outraged dons of University burst upon him. It was the morning of Lady Day, March 25, 1811. Hogg and Shelley having agreed to extend their hours of reading, Hogg was at his friend's rooms at an earlier hour than was usual. But Shelley was out. In a few moments, says Hogg,

> . . . he rushed in. He was terribly agitated. I anxiously inquired what had happened. "I am expelled," he said, as soon as he had recovered himself a little—"I am expelled!"

He then related to his friend how he had been suddenly summoned, that morning, to appear before the Master and Fellows in the Senior Common Room of the college, and had been asked to confess his authorship of the *Necessity*. This question failing to elicit anything except a protest from Shelley against their attempt to force one accused to testify against himself, he was next asked to disavow the publication.[133] This also he declined to do. The master in reply

> said furiously, "Then you are expelled, and I desire you will quit the college early tomorrow morning at the latest."

Shelley was then presented with a regular sentence of expulsion, perhaps drawn up in advance in expectation of his contumacious unwillingness to condemn himself in the witness box. Another such document awaited Hogg, who, the Master and Fellows believed, had written the Preface to the *Necessity*. When, therefore, Hogg wrote to the dons protesting against the precipitate action in the case of his friend, he was summoned, questioned, and notified that University College no

[133] Cf. *Address to the Irish People. Prose Works* ed. 1880. i. 352. "His judge told him [i.e. Finnerty] on his trial, that truth and falsehood were indifferent to the law, and that if he owned the publication, any consideration, whether the facts that it related were well or ill founded, was totally irrelevant."

longer stood in need of his presence.[134] Shelley's own most extended comment on the swiftness with which their doom had been sealed is to be read in his letter to his father, March 29, 1811, from which I have already quoted. He asks:

> How then were we treated? not as our fair, open, candid conduct might demand, no argument was publickly brought forward to disprove our reasoning, and it at once demonstrated the weakness of their cause, and their inveteracy on discovering it when they publickly expelled myself and my friend. . . . I am perfectly indifferent to the late tyrannical violent proceedings at Oxford.[135]

Yet we know that this boast of being "perfectly indifferent" to his sudden ejection from Oxford was but a mask to cover the depth of his injury. Hogg has given us a very different account of Shelley's reaction to the sentence of the authorities:

> He sat on the sofa, repeating, with convulsive vehemence, the words, "Expelled, expelled!" his head shaking with emotion, and his whole frame quivering.[136]

And the same chronicler has left us this story of their conversations before the wrath of the righteous had descended upon them. Shelley is speaking:

> "I can imagine few things that would annoy me more severely than to be disturbed in our tranquil course; it would be a cruel calamity to be interrupted by some untoward accident, to be compelled to quit our calm and agreeable retreat. Not only would it be a sad mortification, but a real misfortune, for if I remain here I shall study more closely and with greater advantage than I could in any other situation that I can conceive. Are you not of the same opinion?"
>
> "Entirely." [Hogg replied.]

[134] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 278–84.
[135] Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 215.
[136] Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* i. 280.

"I regret only that the period of our residence is limited to four years; I wish they would revive, for our sake, the old term of six or seven years. If we consider how much there is for us to learn, we shall allow that the longer period would still be far too short!" [137]

Years after, even, he "continually and openly lamented" to Hogg his "rude and tyrannical extrusion from Oxford."

But from the evidence of another Oxonian of the day, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, it would seem that Shelley put on a bold front to hide his real feelings. Says Sharpe:

He behaved like a hero; "he showed to Fortune's frowns a brow serene," and declared his intention of emigrating to America.[138]

And I think the episode, confirming Miss Grant's account, reported by C. J. Ridley, later [139] a Fellow of University College, of how Hogg and Shelley

had made themselves as conspicuous as possible by great singularity of dress, and by walking up and down the centre of the quadrangle as if proud of their anticipated fate [140]

was a sheer piece of boyish braggadocio, and might well have been laughed at as such. Instead, Ridley's memorandum supported by Miss Grant, further establishes that for some time anger at the behavior of both youths had been smouldering in the bosoms of the authorities of University, and needed but another breath of wind to blow it into a roaring fire. This the otherwise-innocuous pamphlet furnished, and so the two young men who were not usual in anything but unusual in

[137] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 92.

[138] Letter to Lady Charlotte Campbell, from Oxford, Oct. 1811. *Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.* i. 483.

[139] In 1813. Prof. Dowden is in error on this point. I have to thank Dr. Macan, Master of University, for this correction.

[140] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 123–4.

everything came to grief at the hands of an institution which like others of its kind has ever housed the iconoclast only with open or hidden resentment.

"Little do these men," wrote Coleridge of the bishops, "know what atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an atheist." [141] Unfortunately, Coleridge never had the opportunity of meeting Shelley, the "one man in ten thousand." For the ejection from Oxford did not drive him into the fold of orthodoxy, but by strengthing that curious sense of persecution which was early aroused in him by the attitude of his father toward his thinking, fortified his resolution to "crush the wretch" [142] of Intolerance. Believing with Plutarch that it is far less infamous to deny the existence of a Supreme Being, than to entertain dishonorable and degrading notions of Him, Shelley broke with the beliefs of his nearest and dearest kin, and when he was rewarded for it by "that most conclusive of syllogisms—persecution," [143] the courage within him awoke, nerving him to battle.

"I suppose it is excessively heterodox," confessed Jane Welsh Carlyle to John Sterling, "and in a Catholic country I should be burnt for it, but to you I may safely confess that I care almost nothing about what a man believes in comparison with how he believes. If his belief be correct it is much the better for himself; but its intensity, its efficacy, is the ground on

[141] *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge.* i. 89.

[142] Which, as the Abbé Barruel is at pains to explain in a work read by Shelley at this time, meant in the French revolutionary writers, to "crush Christ." With Shelley it meant to crush the formalized Christianity of the churches.

[143] *On the Devil and Devils. Prose Works* ed. 1880. iii. 389. Peacock, in *Nightmare Abbey* ed. 1818, has described how, in the old days of the polemical theologians, "one wound up his series of syllogisms with the very orthodox conclusion of roasting the other." (p. 16).

which I love and trust him!" [144] That Shelley's beliefs were for him as summonses to so many crusades all students of his life and work know; and that in the prosecution of those crusades he risked everything and suffered endlessly these also know. The problem of the moment is how it happened that Shelley, in whom Mr. Yeats [145] discovers a rebirth of the age of faith, and in whom Browning [146] thought he perceived one who, had he lived long enough, would have arrayed himself among the Christians, should have begun his career by championing atheism. "Why do you call yourself an atheist?" Trelawny asked Shelley; and the poet answered:

> It is a word of abuse to stop discussion, a painted devil to frighten the foolish, a threat to intimidate the wise and good. I used it to express my abhorrence of superstition; I took up the word as a Knight took up a gauntlet, in defiance of injustice. *The delusions of Christianity are fatal to genius and originality: they limit thought.*[147]

It has so long been the habit to take the first part of this Trelawny quotation as explanatory of Shelley's position that some emphasis upon its last sentence is necessary. *Not* Christianity, but the accompaniments of Christianity—ritualism, that had grown upon the body of the church, or had been superimposed upon it as the faith of Christ fought its way forward through the Holy Land, and the Roman Empire, and north and west through the savage tribes of Europe; intellectual death that had followed the subjection of reason to faith in dogma; hypocrisy, in a church which, though it had arisen

[144] Letter, June 15, 1835, in *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle.* i. 19.

[145] *Ideas of Good and Evil,* 110.

[146] *On the Poet Subjective and Objective,* essay prefixed to the spurious *Letters of Shelley,* published by Moxon in 1852.

[147] Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron* 60. The italics are my own.

From a contemporary print

from a teaching of self-sacrifice, and love, and the forgiveness of sins, had since shut its New Testament, worshipped wealth and ease, countenanced war, and preached endless torment for the wayward sinner—it was upon these things that Shelley declared war. If we can believe historical evidence there was need of some such challenge in England one hundred years ago. The parson of the Spectator Club, who was hastening to the goal of all his dreams, so much preoccupied with thoughts of the Hereafter that he had no leisure for being of service Here, had not perished with Addison. He still held comfortable livings, preached endless sermons, and was everywhere equally out of step with the needs of his people and the advance of the human mind, an unreal shadow of leadership, a hollow voice of consolation. Oxford, always affected by and affecting the state of the establishment in England, was peopled with his type, who, being provided with adequate fellowships, were not troubled with the pressing problems of the people of England, the possibility of alleviating suffering, eliminating wage-slavery, cleansing rotten boroughs, or enfranchising the mass of her citizens. Secure in their settled leisure they received the Sacrament and led unblemished lives without the colour of action or the warmth of a life-giving creed.

It was, therefore, from this Oxford that Shelley and Hogg were set adrift, two untrained mariners, upon the wide sea of life; and on the morning of the 22nd of March, 1811, looked their last upon that quaint old town whose

> . . . towers far and near
> Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.[148]

and in which they but a little while since dreamed that they might tarry, and read, and grow into the full powers of sentient maturity.

[148] *Laon and Cythna.* xii. 4493–4.

CHAPTER V

INTERVAL

Life in London with Hogg—Meetings with Harriet Westbrook—Visit to Wales—Correspondence with Elizabeth Hitchener.

ARRIVED in London, Shelley's first move was to call on his cousin, Thomas Medwin. "I remember," writes Medwin, "as if it occurred yesterday, his knocking at my door in Garden Court, in the Temple, at four o'clock in the morning, the second day after his expulsion. I think I hear his cracked voice, with his well-known pipe,—'Medwin, let me in, I am expelled'; here followed a sort of loud, half-hysteric laugh, and a repetition of the words—'I am expelled,'—'for Atheism.'[1] From his cousin's rooms, Shelley set out with Hogg in search of London quarters, and after refusing several lodgings, merely because street-cries, or the maid's nose, or the voice of the landlady proved disagreeable to Shelley, the inseparable friends settled at last in a back sitting-room on the first floor of 15 Poland Street. The memory of Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* predisposed Shelley in favor of the street; in which—though Shelley would hardly have known this—Dr. Burney, father of Madame D'Arblay, and the friend of Dr. James Lind, Shelley's Eton mentor, had lived in a former day.[2] To Shelley the vivid wall-paper of the rooms at Number 15 made a particular appeal, for it displayed rows on rows of grape-clusters, "green and purple, all represented in lively colours."[3]

[1] Medwin, *Revised Life of Shelley.* 87–8.
[2] Mme. D'Arblay, *Memoirs of Dr. Burney.* i. 167.
[3] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 297.

Notice of his son's expulsion must have been sent to Timothy Shelley by the authorities of University College on the very day of that event; for on the 27th of March the aggrieved father wrote to Hogg, withdrawing an invitation previously extended to him to spend the Easter vacation at Field Place. Two days later Bysshe wrote to his father a full statement of the causes of the expulsion of Hogg and himself, and enclosed a copy of *The Necessity of Atheism.* On receipt of this communication Timothy Shelley immediately posted to London and took rooms at his city address, Miller's Hotel, over Westminster Bridge. From a letter written by himself to Bysshe on the 5th of April we may deduce that an interview between father and son occurred on Sunday the 31st of March preceding, which resulted in a temporary *impasse;* for Timothy in this letter appeals to Shelley, saying: "I am unwilling to receive and act on the information you gave me on Sunday, as the ultimate determination of your mind." He then proposed to Bysshe

1. To go immediately to Field Place, and to abstain from all communication with Mr. Hogg for some considerable time.

2. That you shall place yourself under the care and society of such gentleman as I shall appoint, and attend to his instructions and directions he shall give.[4]

Should his son decline these terms, he added:

I am resolved to withdraw myself from you, and leave you to the punishment and misery that belongs to the wicked pursuit of an opinion so diabolical and wicked as that which you have dared to declare, if you shall not accept the proposals.[5]

Shelley, unmoved, replied to this ultimatum:

[4] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 130.
[5] *Ibid.* i. 313–314.

I feel it my duty, although it gives me pain to wound "the sense of duty to your own character, to that of your family and your . . . feelings as a Christian" decidedly to refuse my assent to both the proposals in your letter and to affirm that similar refusals will always be the fate of similar requests.[6]

But before this refusal reached Timothy Shelley, the latter had addressed two letters hastily conceived and as hastily dispatched, to John Hogg, Esq., the father of Shelley's chum. In these letters the much-perturbed squire of Field Place appealed to the elder Hogg to use his influence to separate the young men and cause them to return to their homes. "Paley's *Natural Theology*," he promised Hogg, "I shall recommend my young man to read; it is extremely applicable. I shall read it with him." [7] As to the merits of the author of *The View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794) De Quincey, writing in 1835, said: "Paley, as a philosopher, is a jest, the disgrace of the age.—But," continued he, "on the other hand, for style, Paley is a master." [8] John Mill has tersely summarized Paley's position: "God is stronger than we are, and is able to damn us if we do not do good. This is no exaggeration of the sentiments of Paley, and hardly even of the crudity of his language." [9]

To Miller's Hotel, at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 7th of April, came Hogg and Shelley, for a conference with the latter's father and another person, the father of Edward Graham, who made a fourth at the council-table. Hogg's description of Timothy Shelley's blundering but well-meaning behavior on this occasion is inimitable; though probably not as

[6] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 130.
[7] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 314–315.
[8] *Works*. ii. 62. (ed. Masson. 1889).
[9] *Dissertations*. i. 436.

From an 18th century print

Whose *Natural Theology* Timothy Shelley read to Bysshe.

meritorious for the facts conveyed as for its portrait—one of the best in Hogg's abundant gallery of the Shelley circle—of the squire of Field Place.

> Mr. Timothy Shelley received me kindly; but he presently began to talk in an odd, unconnected manner; scolding, *crying*, swearing, and then *weeping again:* . . . he went on strangely.[10]

The reception was somewhat similar to that which the anonymous author of *A Newspaper Editor's Reminiscences* received at Field Place a little later:

> . . . Mr. Shelley invited me into the house, and we had a long conversation, in the course of which he *almost shed tears* when alluding to the doctrines which his son professed, and took a pleasure in promulgating.[11]

Shelley being despatched on an errand for his father, Timothy questioned Hogg as to what he ought to do with Bysshe. Hogg suggested that a marriage might sober Shelley; and that Timothy might arrange a meeting between Bysshe and some worthy young woman with whom the youthful enthusiast might fall in love. Timothy and his friend Graham discussed the suggestion in low tones, until Shelley reëntered. Timothy had been drinking generously during the interview. Another bottle of wine was proposed, but no one in the circle desiring it, tea instead was served; and after it Timothy again, by Hogg's account, "cried, laughed, scolded, swore, and praised himself, at great length"; asserted that there was "certainly a God," and meeting no contradiction, supported his allegation by reading excerpts from the works of the excellent Paley. And here, with further asseverations on the part of Timothy

[10] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 304–5. The italics are my own.
[11] *Fraser's Magazine,* June 1841. p. 705. The italics are mine.

respecting his own good nature, the interview closed; or rather, closed in Hogg's narrative. For one can scarcely credit all of it; and is obliged to believe that Hogg, who was always inordinately alive to the picturesque and droll in any situation, allowed his hobby to prevail over history and sacrificed the absolute truth concerning that important interview to his love of caricature. The satire is undeniably spiced; but perhaps less than full justice is done to the much-tried Timothy Shelley.

Meanwhile the other father concerned in the double expulsion from Oxford had entrusted the management of negotiations with his son and Shelley to two acquaintances, the Reverend George Stanley Faber, sometime Vicar of Stockton-on-Tees, and R. Clarke of 38–42 New Bond Street. Faber, whom Shelley, writing to Hogg on January 12 preceding, had included in "the Armageddon heroes" who "maintain their posts with all the obstinacy of long-established dogmatism," [12] intervened, sending a letter to Timothy Shelley; but the latter, becoming alarmed as new faces entered the arena of discussion, decided to throw the task of reconciliation and adjustment on the family attorney, William Whitton of 10 Great James Street, Bedford Row, with this commission: "I will, my dear Sir, now leave this young Lunatic to your management, as I shall go home." [13] Faber must also have communicated with Bysshe; for with a letter which reached Timothy Shelley on April 14, Bysshe enclosed the five "proposals" which he and Hogg had agreed on as a basis for reconciliation; and the first of these read:

> The Parties will make to Mr. Faber any apologies that he or his friends may require.[14]

[12] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 170.
[13] Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 228.
[14] *Ibid.* 232.

This would seem to indicate that Faber's endeavors to bring about a peace had ended in some words or acts of Shelley or Hogg or perhaps of both by the two friends which had aroused the ire of the vicar, and caused him to demand apologies.

The other mediator, Clarke, with whom Hogg *père* had been in correspondence or consultation prior to April 6th, wrote on that date to him:

> B. J. came to me this morning from Oxford. I have had the whole history from him; and the reason of all this strange conduct in your son and Shelley is what I supposed, a desire to be singular. There is no striking impiety in the pamphlet; but it goes to show, that, because a supreme power cannot be seen, such power may be doubted to exist. It is a foolish performance, so far as argument goes; but written in good language. These two young men gave up associating with anybody else some months since; never dined in College; dressed differently from all others, and did everything in their power to show singularity, as much as to say, "We are superior to everybody." They have been writing novels. Shelley has published his, and your son has not. Shelley is son to the Member from Shoreham. He has always been odd, I find, and suspected of insanity, but of great acquirements; so is your son; I mean, as to the latter, he is of high repute in College.[15]

An interview between Clarke and Timothy Shelley succeeded; and in this the father of Bysshe must have given voice to his belief, and the belief of others at the time,[16] that his boy's views were in part the result of his intercourse with Jefferson Hogg. For in an undated letter written from 15 Poland Street, Bysshe protests to John Hogg:

[15] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 330–1.

[16] See letter of John Grove to Timothy Shelley, April 11, 1811. Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 231.

Sir,

I accompanied (at his desire) Mr. Jefferson Hogg to Mr. C., who was intrusted with certain propositions to be offered to my friend. I was there extremely surprised; no less hurt than surprised, to find, my father in his interview with Mr. C. had, either unadvisedly or intentionally, let fall expressions, which conveyed an idea, that Mr. J. H. was the "original corruptor" of my principles. That on this subject (notwithstanding his long experience) Mr. T. Shelley must know less than his son, will be conceded; and I feel it but justice, in consequence of your feelings, so natural, what Mr. C. communicated, positively to deny the assertion; I feel this tribute, which I have paid to the just sense of honor you entertain, to be due to you, as a gentleman. I hope, my motives stand excused to your candour.

Myself and my friend have offered concessions; painful, indeed, they are to myself, but such as on mature consideration we find due to our high sense of filial duty.

Permit me to request your indulgence for the liberty I have taken in thus addressing you.[17]

"Suppose," wrote Godwin, in *Political Justice*, "that it is right for one man to possess a greater portion of property than another, whether as the fruit of his industry, or the inheritance of his ancestors. Justice obliges him to regard this property as a trust, and calls upon him maturely to consider in what manner it may be employed for the increase of liberty, knowledge, and virtue.—So far from being entitled to well earned applause, for having employed some scanty pittance in the service of philanthropy, he is in the eye of justice a delinquent, if he withhold any portion from that service." Shelley, who was moved by this reasoning, now began to consider his own position with respect to those great properties over which

[17] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 331–2.

he must some day exercise control. Clearly, his father's notion of their administration was as far removed from his own as were the former's metaphysical and philosophical opinions from his son's views in these fields. Furthermore, the position his father had taken toward his desires to determine the orbit of his life had shown him a tyrant well-meaning but blustering, in his domestic circle. To continue to receive alms from this father, to subject himself by that means to his dictation and control, was a prospect not to be faced with pleasure. He must find a new means of subsistence. He must begin to emancipate himself from the vicious company of "tyrants" and "slaves."

The first step was a letter to his father, written on the 12th or 13th of April.

My dear Father,—I enclose you a copy of the proposals which were submitted after the joint considerations of myself and my Friend to the latter's Father.

He has done us the honour of expressing his approbation of them with the consent of yours.

I do this with a real and sincere wish for coming to an accommodation which I respectfully hope will not now be refused.[18]

Now Timothy Shelley had not read Godwin. He was ignorant of the fact, which that writer never left off emphasizing, that "At a certain age the parental character should perhaps be wholly lost"; that "There is no spectacle that more forcibly extorts the approbation of the human mind, than that of a father and child, already arrived at years of discretion, who live together like brethren"; that, finally, "There is no more unequivocal exhibition of imbecility, than the behavior of a parent who, in his son now become a citizen at large, can-

[18] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. 232.

not forget the child; and who exercises, or attempts to exercise, an unseemly authority over him." [19] Therefore Timothy must now intervene to insist that Bysshe apologize to the authorities of University College, for an act the boy did not recognize as a sin; that he should forsake the only friend who had clung to him in the late crisis, when all the weight and authority of the dons of University College was suddenly in "the late tyrannical violent proceedings" brought to bear upon him; and last, that he should again put himself under the mentorship of such a tutor as he, his father, who upheld the authorities of University College, should select for his guidance.

Timothy having once taken this position, Bysshe's proposals came like a sharp clap of thunder into the midnight of his discontent, upset his poise, and set him writing to Clarke from Field Place, April 14th:

Sir,

This morning I received a letter from my son, who said, he and Mr. Hogg junior had submitted proposals to Mr. Hogg, who had done them the honour of expressing his approbation to them, with the condition of mine.

I found I could do no more with either of them, and as the letter came from the Rev. Mr. F., whose character must be mild and benevolent indeed; yet I consider it right to give my business into Mr. W.'s hands, to guard my honour and character in case of any prosecutions in the Courts, and to direct my son to do what was right in the first instance, so he will now.

Mr. Hogg must be deceived, if he agrees to the proposals. Indeed, what right have these opinionated youngsters to do any such thing? Undutiful and disrespectful to a degree! viz.:

[19] Godwin, *The Enquirer*. New Ed. 1823. 124.

The parties think it their duty to *demand* an unrestrained correspondence.

When Mr. T. J. H. enters at the inns of Court, or commences any other profession, that Mr. P. B. Shelley may be permitted to select that intention in life, which may be consonant with his intentions, to which he may judge his abilities adequate.

Surely, sir, Mr. Hogg never could agree to such insolence.

I beg my compliments to Mr. Hogg, and hope he will be firm and decided with these misguided youngsters.[20]

Clarke, replying on the 15th, explained that the elder Hogg had acceded to the demands of the young men for an unrestrained correspondence first, because he did not see how such correspondence could be *prevented* by any third person; and second, because he hoped—and Clarke urged this upon the youths—that they might henceforth abandon metaphysical debate and the promulgation of heterodoxy in their letters. Hogg was destined for the law, and was soon to be entered upon a course of study leading to that profession. Shelley had expressed a desire to enter the same profession; a notion which Clarke said Hogg *père* had in no wise either encouraged or discouraged, believing this a matter about which only Bysshe's parents should concern themselves. But he (Clarke) had done his best to dissuade Bysshe from entering this field. Jefferson was to depart from London with him on the following day, leaving Bysshe behind, who might at such a moment be more easily approached than formerly.

Attempts on the part of Mr. Hurst, a trustee of some of the Shelley estates, and Robert Parker, Timothy's brother-in-law,[21] to bridge the gulf between Shelley and his father

[20] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 315.

[21] To him Shelley seems to have been somewhat attached; for the youthful author had sent him a copy of *St. Irvyne* with a note begging his acceptance of the volume, and adding: "'Mr. Parker's initial opinion of the book would

had come to naught before Timothy turned the management of negotiations over to his rule-of-thumb attorney, Whitton. Perhaps it was through Hurst, whose interference Shelley had sharply resented in a note of the 10th of April, that Timothy first proposed to his son a trip to Greece—for the double purpose of separating him from Hogg and, if possible, of diverting his thought from atheistic doctrines, etc.—a proposal which Shelley refused to entertain. At any rate, on the 18th of the month the Sussex squire complained bitterly to Whitton: "My son threw away the chance he had of going to the Greek Islands because he would not leave Hogg"; and impressed his attorney with his own ignorance of the source of his son's radicalisms by assuring him: ". . . In what manner he has got all this Heterodoxy in a place fam'd for Piety and Learning I am at a loss to guess." Whitton, with Hogg out of his way, hastened to strengthen the resolution of his client. "I cannot form to myself a reason," he declared to Timothy Shelley, "why you should relinquish your judgment to your own inexperienced son and allow him to say what is most fitting for himself as tho' he alone was capable of judging rightly on the subject." An interview with Bysshe was arranged for Monday, April 22; but was cancelled as the result of a misunderstanding between the young logician and the lawyer. Shelley, on the day that Whitton had proposed this interview, had written to him suggesting his desire to resign his claim to the entail of certain Sussex estates, willed to him—subject to the prior life-interest in the same of Sir Bysshe and Timothy Shelley—by his great-uncle, John Shelley,

be regarded as an honour.'" (Ingpen, *Shelley in England* 124). And from Italy, in November, 1819, he sent his regards to his uncle through Sophia Stacy, Mr. Parker's ward. Angeli, *Shelley and His Friends in Italy*. p. 97, note.

in case my father will divide it equally with my sisters *and my mother*, and allow me now 100 £ per an. as an annuity.[22]

But by an unfortunate chance Whitton in a letter which passed this in transit, declined to "insult" Timothy Shelley by conveying to him "the proposal" Shelley had made to him for a settlement probably on the lines of the letter to his father already discussed and conjecturally dated April 13th. But Bysshe, receiving this note from Whitton before the latter could explain his vague reference to "the proposal," heatedly replied, in a letter whose obvious intent was to teach Whitton his proper place:

Sir,—I am not a likely person to submit to the imperious manner of address, of which this evening's letter is a specimen; nor *am* I inclined to withdraw, nor *ever will* I be inclined to withdraw the proposal which I sent you. As therefore you seem to have much to do in this business on the part of my father, it is your duty either to go through with it, or to give it up. I *never will* withdraw that proposal: It is for my father's or rather my family's interests which ought to be the same that I make it. *Here* is no appeal to mercy, leniency, or favor. I have *not* found nor do I care to find either: but an appeal to justice, reason, humanity if you, if he were deaf to that nothing can be done.—I will not listen to the suggestions of family pride, to interest to fortune I am indifferent and I desire that when I am addressed again, a less authoritative manner be used, or subsequent letters are returned unopened.[23]

Whitton's reply, no less heated, instructed Shelley to consider his delinquencies, concluding on an admonition "to observe a propriety of manners and a decency of expression in communication" with others; a recent failure to observe which would

[22] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. 247.
[23] *Ibid.* 250.

now make it necessary for Shelley to "postpone" his "intended call" and bear in mind that Whitton would henceforth decline to "receive any more letters from a pen so unguarded and insulting." [24] When Timothy Shelley heard of this, he was in despair. He averred to Whitton that his son, being so far gone in his calloused disregard of public opinion, and his utter lack of pride would scarcely "feel the Horrors of being drawn upon a Hurdle, or the shame of being whirl'd in the Pillory." [25] In support of these allegations Timothy added: "I hear he has corresponded with Lucien B[onaparte] and it is thought he did with [Peter] Finnerty. "Perhaps," he concluded, mournfully, "I have not heard half." It is safe to say that he had not; for though no evidence is forthcoming to prove that Shelley did indeed correspond with Lucien Bonaparte, it is a known fact that while still at Oxford he had contributed a guinea to the subscription raised on behalf of the Irish journalist, Finnerty;[26] had perhaps written to Finnerty,[27] and devoted the profits [28] (£100, according to some authorities) [29] from the publication either of *The Posthumous*

[24] *Ibid.* 252.

[25] But Shelley, in *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte* (1817) showed that he resented the visiting of such punishments upon others. *Prose Works.* ii. 106.

[26] Shelley's name appears as a subscriber to this fund, in the *Oxford Herald,* Saturday, March 2, 1811, quoted, MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life.* 106.

[27] The letter to the Editor of *The Statesman* was one of the lot of letters (mainly forgeries) edited by Robert Browning for Edward Moxon in 1852. These MSS. are now in the British Museum (Addit. MSS. 19, 377). One letter from among this lot is admitted to the canon of genuine Shelley documents. That is the letter (No. 154, in Mr. Ingpen's edition of Shelley's *Letters*) dated August 17, 1812, from Lynmouth, Barnstaple, Devon, and alleged to have been sent to Sir James Lawrence.

[28] *Dublin Weekly Messenger,* Saturday, March 7, 1812, quoted MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life.* 106.

[29] *Ibid.* quoted, MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life.* 255.

Fragments of Margaret Nicholson[30] or of the now-lost *Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things*[31] to his relief. Another liberal journalist had been found "not guilty" on February 22, 1811, of a charge of republishing an alleged libel against the government. This journalist was Leigh Hunt; and a more daring critic of government never held an editorial pen in England. Probably in the *Examiner* (edited by Leigh Hunt and published by his brother John) for Sunday, February 24th, 1811, Shelley read the account of the verdict, which was obtained mainly as the result of the eloquent defence of the Hunts conducted by Brougham. Be this as it may, on March 3rd Shelley wrote Leigh Hunt, urging upon him, "as one of the most fearless enlighteners of the public mind" the necessity for "a meeting of—enlightened and unprejudiced members of the community—to form a methodical society—to resist the coalition of the enemies of liberty."

The source of his idea Shelley next indicates, by saying: "—nor can any of us bear in mind the very great influence, which some years since was gained by *Illuminism,* without considering that a society of equal extent might establish national liberty on as firm a basis as that which would have supported the visionary schemes of a completely equalized community." Illuminism—coalition of the enemies of liberty—whence had Shelley these phrases? Since we have the quadruple evidence of Hogg,[32] Shelley himself,[33] Mary's journal

[30] So says Henry Slatter, in Montgomery's *Oxford, a Poem,* 3rd ed., revised. 1834. 165; and the statement is also made in the *Dublin Weekly Messenger* article noted above.

[31] For a full account of this lost work, published in 1811, and which may have been Shelley's composition, see MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life* 100 ff.

[32] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 188.

[33] *Letters.* i. 263.

book,[34] and the present owner of Shelley's set of this now-moribund four-volume work,[35] I suppose it is not improbable that Shelley got these phrases and a number of other ideas, which will appear in his writings as our narrative goes forward, from Clifford's translation (four vols. 1798) of the Jesuit Abbé Barruel's *Memoirs of a History of Jacobinism.* In that work this "expatriated Jesuit" [36] endeavored to show how the French Revolution had been fomented by "a *coalition* of the Sophisters of Impiety swearing to overturn the thrones of Kings; and of the Sophisters of Anarchy conspiring not only against the altar and throne, but swearing to annihilate all laws, property, and society." [37] To do this he devotes two volumes of his four to an exposition of the history and secret mysteries of the society of illuminees founded by Spartacus Weishaupt in May 1776, at the University of Ingolstadt. With Shelley's declarations to Hunt as to the aims and purposes of the association he wished to form in England let us compare Barruel's text of the *Discourse on the Degree of True Illuminee:*

There certainly exist in the world public crimes which every wise and honest man would wish to suppress. When we consider that every man in this delightful world might be happy, but that their happiness is prevented by the misfortunes of some, and by the crimes and errors of others; that the wicked have power over the good; that opposition or partial insurrection is useless; that hardships generally fall upon men of worth;—then naturally results the wish of seeing an association formed of men of vigorous and noble minds, capable of resisting

[34] Mrs. Julian Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* (2 vols., 1889). i. 77, 78, 92.

[35] *Notes and Queries* Feb. 10, 1917.

[36] *Proposals for an Association* 1812. *Prose Works,* i. 382. Shelley habitually misspelled the Abbé's name, referring to him as Baruel.

[37] *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* i. 4.

the wicked, of succouring the good, and of procuring for themselves rest, content, and safety—of producing all these effects, by means drawn from the greatest degree of force of which human nature is capable.[38]

Historical precedents for such an association as Shelley proposed were furnished by the Irish, Scottish, and English associations of the last decade of the eighteenth century, described by the Abbé in the appendix to the fourth volume of his exposé of the Jacobins. Of these the Irish association, to mention only one, had as its declared end:

> The rights of men in Ireland; the greatest happiness of the greatest number in this Island; the inherent and indefeasible claims of every free nation; since the rights of man are the rights of God; and to indicate the one is to maintain the other. We must be free, in order to serve him whose service is perfect freedom.[39]

Of course no actual organization sprang from Shelley's suggestion; but the idea persisted in his mind, and its later fruit is to be found in the *Proposals for an Association of Those Philanthropists, Who Convinced of the Inadequacy of the Moral and Political State of Ireland to Produce Benefits Which are Nevertheless Attainable, are Willing to Unite to Accomplish its Regeneration* (Dublin, 1812); the *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote Throughout the Kingdom* (London, 1817); and the latter part of *The Mask of Anarchy* (written 1819; not published until 1832) beginning with stanza lxv wherein Shelley pleads:

> Let a great Assembly be
> Of the fearless, and the free,

[38] Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism.* iii. 107–8.
[39] Barruel, *Ibid.* iv. Appendix p. 3.

On some spot of English ground,
Where the plains stretch wide around.

But if no association was born of this letter to Hunt, a friendship was; and two years later, when Hunt as the result of a third prosecution, faced two years' imprisonment and the payment of a fine of £1,000, Shelley wrote, says Hunt, "making me a princely offer"; [40] but the offer, whether for the payment of the whole or only of a considerable part of the fine, we cannot now determine, was declined. Subsequently, we know, Shelley by other benefactions through a number of years did in effect pay this fine, twice over.[41] But this was only after Hunt had found that the sufferings of himself and his family growing out of this prison term, and the huge fine imposed by the court, could only be met by outside help. From first to last Hunt was no sluggard; his life was one of almost ceaseless journalistic work of the sternest and most exacting kind; and his difficulties were not those of a loafer. He lacked, however, a practical, hard-headed, business sense; and there is reason to believe that he was not assisted in his efforts to extricate himself from entangling debt by the domestic economies of his wife.[42]

The "loans" so freely made by Shelley to Hunt were with but few exceptions heartily bestowed and graciously received. We have Shelley's own testimony to the latter, in the hitherto unpublished first draft of the *Dedication, to Leigh Hunt, of The Cenci:*

[40] *Autobiography* (new ed. 1860) 242.

[41] Barnette Miller states that the sum total of Shelley's bequests to his friend, during his (Shelley's) life amounted to £2500. *Leigh Hunt's Relations with Byron, Shelley, and Keats,* Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1910. p. 73.

[42] H. W. Nevinson, *The Nation,* May 22, 1909.

. . . if I had known a person more endowed with all that it becomes a man to posess [*sic*] I would have solicited for this work the honour of his name. One more gentle, innocent, honourable, brave & true, one of more exalted toleration for all who are evil; one who knows better both how to recieve [*sic*] & to confer a benefit though he must ever confer more than he can recieve [*sic*].[43]

Of the exceptions it need only be said that they arose not from Shelley's unwillingness to aid his friend by advances of money, but from his own straitened circumstances, which made it necessary for him to borrow from other friends in order to provide for Hunt. On one occasion a very large sum was thus advanced to Hunt by virtue of a loan secured by Shelley from Horace Smith; [44] and on another by Shelley's borrowing from Byron the amount desired by the prospective editor of *The Liberal*.[45] Perhaps on some of these occasions Hunt might have been more considerate or regardful of Shelley's circumstances; but we cannot be certain that Shelley, who would have been the last man in the world to embarrass his friend, made him aware of the facts on these occasions.

Yet, though Shelley's munificence in providing for Hunt constitutes one of the finest chapters in a life not unworthily or slightly distinguished for its unselfishness, Hunt in a measure repaid his friend, if not as early as he might,[46] yet without stint when he did come forward to champion his literary work

[43] Pforzheimer MS., from Thornton Leigh Hunt Collection. Now first published, by permission of the owner of the MS., and of Sir John Shelley-Rolls, Bart.

[44] Medwin, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 137.

[45] Letter to Leigh Hunt, Feb. 23, 1822. Nicoll and Wise, *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century* 252, 356, and letter of Byron to Kinnaird, Feb. 6, 1822. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*. vi. 11.

[46] The first mention of Shelley was a brief reference to *Alastor* in the *Examiner* for December 1, 1816, in the now famous editorial on *Young Poets* which also introduced Keats to literary England.

before an indifferent public. His reviews of Shelley's poems, *Alastor*,[47] *Laon and Cythna*,[48] *Rosalind and Helen*,[49] *The Cenci*,[50] *Prometheus Unbound*,[51] and *Adonais* [52] in the *Examiner* and of *The Cenci* [53] in the *Indicator;* the publication of *Love's Philosophy*,[54] parts of *The Sunset*,[55] *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*,[56] *Marianne's Dream*,[57] *Lines to a Critic*,[58] *Ozymandias*,[59] *On a Faded Violet*,[60] *The Indian Serenade*,[61] *The Question*,[62] *Sonnet*, "Ye hasten to the grave," [63] *Lines to a Reviewer*,[64] and *Good-Night*,[65] *passim* in the *Indicator, Examiner, Liberal*, and *Literary Pocket-Books;* together with his prose tributes to Shelley in *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*,[66] "the preface prefixed to *The Mask of Anarchy* [67] (which poem Hunt was the first to publish), a birth-

[47] *Examiner* Dec. 1, 1816. 761.

[48] *Ibid.* Sun., Feb. 1, 1818. pp. 75–6; Sun., Feb. 22, 1818, pp. 121–2; Sun., Mar. 1, 1818, pp. 139–141; and more than a year later he defended Shelley from the Quarterly Reviewer's attack on this poem in *Examiner*, Sun., Sept. 26, 1819, pp. 620–1; Sun., Oct. 3, 1819, pp. 635–6; and Sun., Oct. 10, 1819.

[49] *Ibid.* Sun., May 9, 1819, pp. 302–3.

[50] *Ibid.* Sun., Mar. 19, 1820, pp. 190–1.

[51] *Ibid.* Sun., Jan. 20, 1822, p. 35; Sun., June 9, 1822, p. 355–7; Sun., June 16, 1822, p. 370; Sun., June 23, 1822, p. 389–90.

[52] *Ibid.* Sun., July 7, 1822, pp. 419–21.

[53] *Indicator*, Wed., July 10, and Wed., July 26, 1820.

[54] *Ibid.* Wed., Dec. 22, 1819, p. 88.

[55] *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823.

[56] *Examiner*, Jan. 19, 1817, p. 41.

[57] *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823.

[58] *The Liberal*, No. III. 1823, pp. 187–8.

[59] *Examiner*, Sun., Jan. 11, 1818, p. 24.

[60] *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1821.

[61] *The Liberal*, No. II. 1822, p. 397.

[62] *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1822.

[63] *Ibid.* 1823.

[64] *Ibid.* 1823.

[65] *Ibid.* 1822.

[66] First ed. 1828, pp. 174–229.

[67] pp. v–xxx.

From a contemporary print

THE ADMIRALTY AND HORSE GUARDS

Where Shelley, with disapproving eyes, watched a military review in 1811.

day notice in *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*,[68] the biographical sketch contributed to *The Book of Gems: The Modern Poets and Artists of Great Britain*,[69] and his *Autobiography*[70] sufficiently attest Hunt's generosity of spirit. On the other hand, to discredit the allegation often made, that Hunt was to a considerable degree jealous of Shelley's poetic abilities and achievements, it must be admitted that he overvalued the worth of his own verse; but I cannot discover any traces of jealousy[71] toward him whom he deemed his "incomparable friend" and whom he coupled, in most reverent tribute, with his mother in his affection, saying: "I have known Shelley, I have known my mother."[72]

Recurring, however, to Shelley's life in London after Hogg's departure for York, we can picture him going with Medwin on long walks through the city parks, and along the banks of the Serpentine, with no divination, certainly, of the tragedy to be enacted thereon five years later. The sight of soldiers drilling in St. James Park a short while since[73] had set the young reformer protesting against the evils of a standing army which, before his birth, Mary Wollstonecraft had

[68] Wednesday, July 30, 1834, p. 139, cols. 1–2.

[69] Ed. 1838, p. 40.

[70] New ed. 1860, pp. 255–266; and 321–323.

[71] I am disposed to believe that Trelawny's disparagement of Hunt in the book (*Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author.* i. 174–5.) which was the "last fruit from an old tree" is of a piece with his collected sentiments respecting Mary Shelley in the same volume; and not to be trusted. Hunt's alleged disparagement of Byron's poetry is elsewhere substantiated, however, by Haydon, (*Correspondence and Table Talk of B. R. Haydon.* ii. 420) who quotes Hunt as having said to him in 1833 of Byron "He wrote poetry, yes, *such as it is.*" But neither Haydon nor Trelawny is an unimpeachable historian. (Cf. Colvin *John Keats: His Life, Poetry, and Afterfame*, 1917, p. 62; and article by the present writer on *The Cremation of Shelley* in *Times Literary Supplement*, Thursday, Dec. 9, 1920. pp. 838–9.)

[72] *Correspondence of Leigh Hunt.* i. 269.

[73] Letter of Charles H. Grove to Hogg. *Life of Shelley.* ii. 563.

declared "incompatible with freedom; because subordination and rigour are the very sinews of military discipline; and despotism is necessary to give vigour to enterprise that one will directs." [74] Shelley saw in every soldier a menace to popular liberty, one "more degraded than a murderer"; who was "like the bloody knife which has stabbed and feels not"; in short, a man who by his profession was "beyond abhorrence and below contempt." [75] This opposition to war ran through the circle of Shelley's friends, and we find Leigh Hunt in a later day ridiculing it as a superstition. "Two nations, or most likely two governments, have a dispute; they reason the point backwards and forwards; they cannot determine it; perhaps they do not wish to determine it; so, like two carmen in the street, they fight it out; first, however, dressing themselves up to look fine, and pluming themselves on their absurdity; just as if the two carmen were to go and put on their Sunday clothes, and stick a feather in their hat besides, in order to be as dignified and fantastic as possible." [76] From the *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* to *Hellas* Shelley himself waged "unweariable war" [77] upon war and all its accompanying phenomena.

From attack on the art of destroying life, Shelley turned with passion to embrace the science of healing and strengthening it. His cousin, Charles Grove, was at this time a medical student in London, and Shelley became intensely interested in anatomy through attendance with Grove upon a series of lectures being delivered by a Mr. Abernethy. He also underwent some in-

[74] *Vindication of the Rights of Woman.* 1792. 26.

[75] *Philosophical View of Reform,* pub. 1820. 68. But Shelley favored the maintenance of a navy which should keep "watch round this glorious island against the less enlightened nations." *Ibid.* 56.

[76] *Captain Sword and Captain Pen.* 3rd ed., 1849. 20.

[77] *Queen Mab.* vii. 198.

struction at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and by the following autumn had announced his intention of entering the medical profession.[78] Circumstances, as will be seen, intervened to prevent the consummation of this intent; but the training he received in 1811 stood him in good stead six years later when at Marlow "the poorest cottagers knew and benefited by his thoroughly *practical* and unselfish nature," for "he would visit them, and, having gone through a course of medical study in order that he might assist them with advice [here I think the Cowden-Clarkes are not literally correct; there is no evidence that Shelley took any course of training in physic after 1811] would commonly administer the tonic, which such systems usually require, of a good basin of broth or pea-soup." [79]

But Shelley missed his friend, Hogg, in the weeks that followed the latter's entrance into study at Ellesmere for the post he was to take at York. "Certainly this place is a little solitary," Shelley wrote, from the trellised rooms at 15 Poland Street, on the 18th of April, "but as a person cannot be quite alone when he has even got himself with him, I get on pretty well. I have employed myself in writing poetry, and as I go to bed at eight o'clock, time passes quicker than it otherwise might." [80]

Yet comfort and companionship, more satisfying to Shelley than that of Medwin, was not lacking. Some four months earlier (as we have noted) at the conclusion of Oxford's Christmas vacation, Mary Shelley had sent by her brother a present to her school chum,[81] Harriet Westbrook, then at the

[78] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener. Oct. 8, 1811. *Letters to Elizabeth Hitchener.* ed. Dobell. 1908. 46.

[79] C. and M. C. Clarke, *Recollections of Writers.* 1878. 151.

[80] Letter to Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 343.

[81] Both girls were attending a school originally kept by a Mrs. Fenning, but afterwards by a Miss Hawkes, at Clapham.

home of her father,[82] in London. On this occasion Shelley was accompanied by his cousin, Charles Grove.[83] "I scarcely know how it came about," wrote Grove, forty years later, "but from that time Bysshe corresponded with Miss Westbrook." So well were they acquainted by the middle of April that in the letter of the 18th of that month, already referred to, Shelley announced to Hogg: "Miss Westbrook has this moment called on me, and with her sister. It certainly was very kind of her." [84] The "kindness" is made more clear by the unpublished MS. account, in the British Museum, by the Reverend John Mitford, of a conversation with Thomas Hookham respecting the Shelleys. Mitford's account reads in part: "P. B. Shelley's Sisters went to School at Clapham with a Miss Westbrook, Sh[elley] used to call on them, and he saw this girl. Soon after he fell ill in Poland St. and she used to call and sit with him." [85] Peacock says that Harriet acted at this time as intermediary between Elizabeth Shelley and her brother, "conveying to him such small sums as she and her sister could afford to send, and other little presents which they thought would be acceptable." [86]

"She had a good figure, light, active, and graceful." So a novelist-friend of Shelley's described Harriet. "Her features were regular and well proportioned. Her hair was light brown, and dressed with taste and simplicity. In her dress

[82] John Westbrook, a retired tavern keeper, whose London residence was at 23, Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square.

[83] Who has left the only record of this first meeting which we now have. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 552.

[84] *Ibid.* i. 344.

[85] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 32, 574 ff. 19–21 (See Appendix.) Hookham's statement is substantiated by Shelley's sentence: "I am now nearly recovered" in his letter to Hogg, April 24, 1811.

[86] *Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, in *Works of Thomas Love Peacock*. 1875. iii. 400–1.

BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL,

From a contemporary print

Where Shelley attended medical lectures delivered by Abernethy

she was truly *simplex munditiis*. Her complexion was beautifully transparent; the tint of the blush rose shining through the lily. The tone of her voice was pleasant; her speech the essence of frankness and cordiality; her spirits always cheerful; her laugh spontaneous, hearty and joyous. She was well educated.—Her manners were good; and her whole aspect and demeanour such manifest emanations of pure and truthful nature, that to be once in her company was to know her thoroughly." [87] Hellen Shelley remembered her, a half-century later, as "a very handsome girl, with a complexion quite unknown in these days—brilliant in pink and white—with hair quite like a poet's dream, and Bysshe's peculiar admiration." The poet's sister also recalled that at the school at Clapham Common Harriet's beauty was a matter of remark among the faculty of the institution, who had declared that in the event of a Fête Champêtre at the school, "Harriet Westbrook might enact Venus." [88]

It is a well-known fact that no biographer of Shelley dare with impunity credit all nor by any means even a large part of Shelley's derogatory statements voiced to one woman concerning [89] another. Yet there can be no good reason for believing that he was telling an untruth when he wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener, in October 1811, in praise of Harriet: "If Harriet be not, at sixteen, all that you are at a more advanced age, assist me to mould a really noble soul into all that can make its nobleness useful and lovely. *Lovely it is now, or I*

[87] *Works of Thomas Love Peacock.* 1875. iii. 420.

[88] Letter of Hellen Shelley to Jane, Lady Shelley, pub. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 174.

[89] Although Professor Dowden has set me the example by his willing-unwilling acceptance of rumours defaming Harriet, I am unable to place equal reliance on Shelley's account, given to Harriet and by Harriet communicated to Mrs. Nugent, of how Mary Godwin "ensnared" Shelley. *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* London. pr. pr. 1889. 57–8.

am the weakest slave to error." [90] Nor is it possible to disbelieve that in this assertion Shelley spoke truth. For this is the Harriet forever written down in the letters to Elizabeth Hitchener and to Catherine Nugent, and the Harriet of the last sad letter to her sister on the eve of the tragedy of 1816.

Shelley, whom in his sick-room Harriet had visited, soon repaid her kindness; for two days after dining with Harriet at her home on an evening when her father was "out," he reports to Hogg: "My poor little friend has been ill, her sister sent for me the other night. I found her on a couch pale; her father—civil to me, very strangely; the sister—too civil by half. She began talking about *l'Amour*. I philosophised, and the youngest said, she had such a headache, that she could not bear conversation. Her sister then went away, and I stayed till half-past twelve." The day of this letter, Harriet having recovered, she was "compelled" by her father to return to school at Clapham, whither Shelley "conducted her."

The intimacy of these two days, coming as a climax to the four months' acquaintanceship, the interchange of letters and calls, set Shelley to asking questions. "Why is it," he inquired of Hogg, "that the moment we two are separated, I can scarcely set bounds to my hatred of intolerance, is it feeling? is it passion?" [91] And this question of what it was that most powerfully drew Shelley to Harriet, remains unanswered today.

With Hogg at a distance, it now became necessary for letters to carry the burden of metaphysical disquisition, and this

[90] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 174. The italics are mine.
[91] Letter to Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 349.

began with the letter of the 24th of April, with Shelley's contention that there can be no virtue, necessarily disinterested, in conforming one's acts to a metaphysical system of rewards and punishments. The next letter (April 26) declared faith to be opposed to genuine philosophical enquiry, and charged Christians with uncharitableness for considering atheists, who lack faith, as being not wholly virtuous. Asserting as a doubtful major premise that religion was the child of cold prejudice and selfish fear, he insisted, having left out the second or minor premise from his syllogism, that (conclusion) there could be no true *love* of God in Christianity. Furthermore, rather than believe that it must be in the midst of a thousand wretched in sin that a few eminent in virtue shall start up, he preferred to think that there was a perfection all might attain. The doctrine, of course, was Condorcet's; and Hogg had been combating it with his pointed satire, suggesting that Shelley could "have no idea how society could be freed from false notions on almost every subject." Shelley in his next (April 28) accepted the challenge and fell back on Hamlet's analogy between the state of the world and "an unweeded garden," which the diligent gardener might bring to a condition of fertility. In the next letter [92] his sister's state of mind on the question of religion evokes the query: "Surely she can find benefits enough to return thanks to her Creator for, without having recourse to the mythological personages of superstition?"

Shelley now addressed a young poetess, Janetta Philipps,[93] on the subject of religion, referring to the Oxford pamphlet

[92] Undated, published by Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 399–401. It was, I think, written on April 25, 1811.

[93] Author of *Poems;* pub. Oxford, Collingwood and Co., 1811; to the publication of which Shelley and several of his young friends and relations sub-

on atheism as one in which he had "questioned the existence of a Deity," and adding: "In justice to myself I must also declare that a proof of *his* existence, or even the divine mission of Christ, would in no manner alter one idea on the subject of morality." What this notion of morality was is evident from the next letter to Miss Philipps, wherein he discussed the nature of *obligations*. "Surely," he wrote, "one being is not *obliged* to another for performance of his duty never the most rigid. If obligation exists it must arise from doing to another an unrequited, unrequitable kindness." As to *rewards* for virtue, Shelley would have none of them. First quoting, evidently from a letter of Miss Philipps', "I *should* have a reward, I should feel pleasure in adding to the comforts of genius," he refuted it at once, exclaiming: "What! two rewards for one simple performance of duty—my own feeling and obligations from *you*. This is far too much."

Then follows a most important statement. "As you mention Religion, I will say, that my rejection of *revealed* proceeds from my perfect conviction of its insufficiency to the happiness of man—to this source *I* can trace murder, war, intolerance—my rejection of *natural* arises wholly from *reason*. *I once* was an enthusiastic Deist but never a Christian." By the first part of this declaration Shelley makes more plain what has probably been indicated in part already, that his ob-

scribed most generously, as the following list, published with the volume, shows:

"Mr. P. B. Shelley (six copies)
Miss Shelley, Field Place
Miss Hellen Shelley
Mrs. Grove, Lincoln Inn Fields (three copies)
Miss H. Westbrook
Thomas Medwin, Esq., Horsham
Mr. Munday, Bookseller, Oxford.
Mr. Graham, 29 Vine Street, Piccadilly."

jections to Christianity arose directly from his opposition (1) to the bloodthirstiness attributed in the Old Testament to Jehovah; (2) to the always-hypocritical attitude of the churches on the subject of war, and (3) to the persecutions visited upon dissenters and atheists for belief, which function of reason Shelley held was utterly beyond the pale of coercion. As a vivid evidence of the suffering occasioned by this intolerant spirit Shelley of course had in mind his own expulsion from Oxford, his father's stubborn opposition and attempts to sever him entirely from his mother and sisters and to sequester him from Hogg.

Bitterly, in his next letter to Hogg, he arraigned his father and his sister Elizabeth, for their actual adherence to materialism, for hugging too closely "that hellish idol, the world," and its good opinion while avowing themselves Christians, a body whose teachings emphatically deny the enduring nature of the world. He openly charged these near relatives with canonizing the *vox populi* and disregarding that other voice—to him of infinitely greater importance—"the higher tribunal of conscience."

On the defection of Elizabeth, and Hogg's disappointment therein (Shelley had hoped that Hellen—and Elizabeth too—might become "divine little scions of infidelity," and that Elizabeth might be united to Hogg "without benefit of clergy") he, because he had failed in both parts of his scheme, launched into an extended apologia whose object was to deflect Hogg from any further consideration of Elizabeth as a prospective neophyte in the society of the "crushers" of "Intolerance."

Curiously enough, just as, some months before, when one Harriet had no sooner deserted him, than another Harriet ap-

peared to take her place in Shelley's regard; so now, despairing of one Elizabeth he met another, Elizabeth Hitchener, who stepped in to take her place among the iconoclasts of Shelley's rationalistic persuasion. This individual, famous in Shelleyan history mainly because of the swiftness with which, as the sister of his soul, she degenerated in Shelley's opinion into "the Brown Demon" within a few months, has remained to this day, save for the hints furnished by Hogg's description, and the evidence of the series of letters which Shelley, from June 6, 1811, to June 18, 1812, addressed to her, a rather shadowy personage. Since 1907, however, when not only these letters, but those which Miss Hitchener addressed to Shelley, have been accessible in the British Museum, there has been no good reason for this ignorance of the real character of this brief idol of Shelley's youth. The entire series of twelve letters is given in Appendix D; [94] but I shall content myself with excerpting needful passages as I proceed.

Elizabeth Hitchener, in May 1811, was the teacher of a small school at Hurstperpoint,[95] Sussex. This school was but five miles south of Cuckfield, where Shelley's uncle, Captain Pilfold, lived. One of the captain's daughters, in fact, was attending Miss Hitchener's school at the time, and it was perhaps through this daughter that Shelley, who late in May or at the beginning of June visited his uncle at Cuckfield, first met the school mistress.

Beginning, as Hogg tells us his young chum often began such correspondence, with a declaration of his willingness to be convinced of error in his atheistical notions, Shelley drew

[94] Lately published in a private edition by Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer (New York. The Pynson Press. 1926).

[95] So spelled in Shelley's day; and always so spelled in his letters to Miss Hitchener.

Miss Hitchener on to an interchange of speculative opinions; and she, nothing loth, acceded to his desire, until the increased intimacy of their messages precipitated—but that is anticipating. In the second letter to Miss Hitchener Shelley first quoted Locke's affirmation that "there are no innate ideas," and hence "no innate speculative or practical principles," from which it follows that all intuitions of the existence of a deity must have arisen from "sensual excitation" at a particular time and place. Shelley then announced that for two reasons he desired to convince the schoolmistress of the non-existence of a deity: "First on the score of truth, secondly because I conceive it to be the most summary way of eradicating Christianity." This is succeeded by his familiar tenet,[96] that belief is by nature involuntary, and that Christianity resting upon faith, and the acceptance of certain dogma, is founded not upon reason but on passion. Of course Christ never advocated a subjection of reason to will, or a blind acceptance of any dogma. The regeneration to which he called men was the most complete alteration of the inner man, and his tireless preaching and teaching, his readiness to meet and deal with inquirers of all classes and persuasions, of all ages and races, effectually negative Shelley's contention. But Shelley by referring to the church of his day, or the church that supported the Inquisition, as "Christianity" brought down on his erring head the wrath of those who, however far short in their performance of exemplifying the teachings of their Master, knew that those teachings were true, and did not welcome Shelley's

[96] Cf. *Necessity of Atheism* (Prose Works, ed. 1880, i. 309); *Address to the Irish People* (Prose Works, ed. 1880. i. 324–6); *Declaration of Rights* xxiii. (Prose Works, ed. 1880. i. 396); *Refutation of Deism* (Prose Works. ed. 1880. ii. 42, 52); *Letter to Lord Ellenborough* (Prose Works. ed. 1880. i. 411–14); *Charles the First,* ll. 32–4; *Julian and Maddalo,* l. 360; *Queen Mab* ix. 50.

scheme to "crush the wretch" (Voltairese for *Christ*). For this they have been visited with the upbraidings of all consistent Shelleyolaters. But if these same upholders of Shelley's fame could realize the extent of the disservice they have done to Shelley, they would desist from their clamor.

He explained that he was at war with Christianity because it did not induce to virtue, but taught a morality whose inducements were those of fear of Hell or reward in Heaven rather than the true disinterested virtue which springs from the love of good because it is good, and which is its own reward. Christianity he characterized as "a spurious, irrational,—disjointed system of desultory ethics, insulting intolerant theology," and God "a name which expressed the unknown cause, the supposititious [*sic*] origin of all existence," a concept which "analogises with the *universe*, as the soul of man to his body, as the vegetative power to vegetables," etc.; in short, "the existing power of existence,—the essence of the universe" as the "universe is the essence of it." Virtue indeed exists, but the characteristic of virtue cannot, Shelley thinks, be attached to "the God who beheld with favor the coward wretch Abraham, who built the grandeur of his favorite Jews on the bleeding bodies of myriads, on the subjugated necks of the dispossessed inhabitants of Canaan." Before such "gorgeous and tyrannic majesty" Shelley will not bow, even though "the howl of self-interest is loud" and to worship Whom he did not revere would have smoothed the way to a reconciliation with his own people, now shocked and alienated from him, at Field Place. The harangue ended in a piteous confession to Miss Hitchener that since he had devoted himself "unreservedly" to the employment of reason, he had found "that all pleasure resulting to self" from the exercise of the fancy and the imagination was

"thereby completely annihilated." [97] As for justifying his lengthy metaphysical argument with one who had declared to him "I believe our theory the same," [98] he could only say: "The power which made me a scribbler knows." [99]

In her reply Miss Hitchener quoted Lyttleton: "the man who hates another for not being a Christian is himself not one," [100] and Shelley replied: "Both yourself and Lyttleton are guilty of a mistake of the term *Christian*. A Christian is a follower of the Religion which has constantly gone by the name of Christianity; as a Mahometan is of Mahometanism." Miss Hitchener had expressly declared that "the fears or rewards of hereafter" had "no power" over her; [101] yet Shelley believed the hope of immortality motivated her adherence to Christianity, and proceeded to prove the imperishable nature of the soul from the imperishableness of matter; and to affirm "that in a future existence it [the soul] will lose all consciousness of having formerly lived elsewhere,—will begin life anew, possibly under a shape of which we have no idea." [102]

From metaphysics Shelley then turned to comment on the fête which on June 19, 1811 the Prince Regent gave at Carlton House, at a cost of £120,000. Along the center of the

[97] All preceding quotations from letter of June 11, 1811. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 91–4.

[98] Letter of Elizabeth Hitchener to Shelley, headed "June," Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. ff. 5. 6.

[99] Compare Wordsworth, *Stanzas Written in a Pocket Copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence,* 34–6:

> But verse was what he had been wedded to,
> And his own mind did like a tempest strong,
> Come to him thus, and drove the weary wight along.

[100] Letter to Shelley, June 14, 1811. Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. ff. 10, 11.

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] Is not this the notion of immortality developed in *Adonais?*

grand table, on this occasion, "a canal of pure water continued flowing from a silver fountain, beautifully constructed at the head of the table. Its faintly waving, artificial banks were covered with green moss and aquatic flowers," [103] etc. In short, it was such an ingenious bit of decoration as that which Peacock caused Squire Headlong to provide at a dinner in *Headlong Hall:* "The center of the largest table was decorated with a model of Snowdon, surmounted with an enormous artificial leek, the leaves of angelica, and the bulb of blancmange. A little way from the summit was a tarn, or mountain-pool, supplied through concealed tubes with an inexhaustible flow of milk-punch, which, dashing in cascades down the miniature rocks, fell into the more capacious lake below, washing the mimic foundations of Headlong Hall." [104] Such ostentation and needless expenditure of public funds for the amusement of "this overgrown bantling of Regency" seemed to Shelley to indicate only a state of public morality tallying closely "with the disgusting splendors of the stage of the Roman Empire which preceded its destruction"; and behind it Shelley thought he saw "a people advanced in intellectual improvement, wilfully rushing on to a Revolution, the natural death of all great commercial empires, which must then plunge them in the barbarism from which they are slowly arising." [105]

Immediately connected with the thought of this last is Shelley's appeal to Edward Graham, in an undated letter probably of June 1811: "if thou art not totally hardened to streamlets, whose mossy banks invite the repose of the wan-

[103] *Morning Chronicle,* June 15, 1811.
[104] *Headlong Hall* 1816. 179–80.
[105] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 99–100.

derer—I conjure thee—that thou wilt assist me—in my loyal endeavour to magnify—if magnification be possible, our Noble Royal Family.—Take thou thy tuning fork,—for the ode is coming," a promise which was probably fulfilled, for not only did Shelley append to the letter an apposite stanza from his translation of the *Marseillaise*[106] hymn, but also wrote and published a poem of fifty lines, of which a fragment only has come down to us:

> By the mossy brink,
> With me the Prince shall sit and think,
> Shall muse in visioned Regency,
> Rapt in bright dreams of dawning Royalty.[107]

This he amused himself by throwing into the carriages of guests bound for the fête.[108] The references in the letters, and this fragment, which has no poetic merit whatever, relative to the Carlton House fête are important only in being straws which show which way Shelley's sentiments on public affairs were blowing about the middle of the year 1811, and prepare us to some extent for the biting satire on the same individual as "the plethoric king"[109] of the later *Œdipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot the Tyrant.*

On the 21st of June Shelley directed Hogg to take lodgings for him at York, and if possible at the same house in Coney Street in which Hogg himself was staying. He an-

[106] The full translation was published for the first time by A. H. Koszul, Esq., in the Appendix to his *La Jeunesse de Shelley.* Paris. 1910. 402–4.

[107] First published by Rossetti, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* 1870. ii. 523. The lines were taken down by Dr. Richard Garnett at the dictation of Shelley's grandson, the Rev. Charles Esdaile, who could remember no more of the original than these four lines.

[108] Letter of C. H. Grove to Hellen Shelley, Feb. 25, 1857. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 556–7

[109] *Œdipus Tyrannus.* I. i. 191.

nounced to Hogg that Harriet's father, John Westbrook, had invited him "to accompany him and his two daughters to a house they have at Aberstwyth, in Wales." He promised Hogg that after remaining a week with Mr. Westbrook in London, he would visit him at York. As for the projected match between Hogg and Elizabeth Shelley, he regretfully informed his friend that the prospective bride would consent to such a union *only* with benefit of clergy. He recommended to Hogg a novel, *The Missionary*, by Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan, the friend of Lady Caroline Lamb) as "a divine thing," as a book which had been his "companion for some time," yet ten days before he had spoken in disparagement of this tale to Miss Hitchener, declaring that "it dwells on ideas which when young I dwelt on with enthusiasm, now I laugh at the weakness which is past." The flat contradiction of opinion is not easy to explain.

Two days later (June 23) Shelley proposed that Hogg should visit Field Place secretly where, at midnight, the two friends would prowl to some point in the house whence they could view Shelley's sister, Elizabeth, whose union with Hogg Shelley declared would "soothe" and "restore peace" to himself.

To the other Elizabeth (Miss Hitchener) on the 25th of June Shelley pointed out the error of the hypothesis that man formerly existed in a perfect state, and the fallacy of seeking support for that theory in the Bible which is itself in part dependent for its veracity or unveracity on the truth or untruth of such statements. As for the existence of intellect apart from matter he presented those pictures of the body in sleep and in death which were later (1813) to reappear as

From a contemporary aquatint

Where the Prince Regent's levee was held, in 1811, which provoked Shelley's lost verse satire on such profligacy.

part of *Queen Mab*,[110] arguing that as in sleep mind persists so in death must the soul. "Atheism," he boldly avouched, "appears a terrific monster at a distance; *dare* to examine it, look at its companions—it loses half its terrors."[111] Miss Hitchener had declared that her God was Truth. Shelley urged her to hold to that conception of a Deity. His political theories, he said, had not altered. "I am no aristocrat," he told her, "nor any *crat* at all but vehemently long for the time when man may *dare* to live in accordance with *Nature* and *Reason;* in consequence, with Virtue, to which I firmly believe that Religion, its establishment, Polity and its establishments, are the formidable tho destructible barriers." The trip to Wales of which he had written Hogg, was now at hand. He informed Miss Hitchener, "On Monday I shall be in London on my way to Wales, where I purpose to spend the summer. My excursion will be on foot for the purpose of better remarking the manners and dispositions of the peasantry." This last announcement leads one to wonder whether it was Wordsworth or Rousseau who put him on the track.

Since Elizabeth Shelley had defaulted from the company of the Crushers of Intolerance, her brother now no longer had respect for her poetic genius. "I do not rest much on her poetry now," he informed Hogg in his next letter.[112] His solitariness in his home was touched upon with a kind of sly humor, and yet with a wistful sadness: "I am a perfect hermit: not a being to speak with! I sometimes exchange a word with my mother on the subject of the weather, upon

[110] *Queen Mab.* i. 31–33; 130–156.

[111] Cf. Shelley's remark to Trelawny. Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* 1858. 60.

[112] Assigned by Mr. Ingpen to June 27.

which she is irresistibly eloquent; otherwise all is deep silence! I wander about this place, walking all over the grounds, with no particular object in view. I cannot write, except now and then to you—sometimes to Miss Westbrook." Once again he urged Hogg to read *The Missionary*, averring: "Since I have read this book, I have read no other." Enclosing some verses on the betrayal of love, which are of interest only as they indicate that his thoughts were still on the daughter of Thomas Grove, he continued: "I have been thinking of Death and Heaven for four days. What is the latter? Shall we set off? [113] Is there a future life? Whom shall we injure by departing? Should we not benefit some? I was thinking last night, when from the summer house I saw the moon just behind one of the chimneys, if she alone were to witness our departure?" He then promises Hogg that he should see him in three weeks, at *York*, on his way to *Wales*. He explained this extraordinary routing by adding to the mention of Wales, "where possibly I shall not go." He would "pedestrianize," he reminded his friend.

But his plans miscarried and he did not go to York. When Hogg and Miss Hitchener next heard from him he was at the estate of his uncle, Thomas Grove, at Cwm Elan, near Rhayader,[114] in Radnorshire, South Wales.[115] "This coun-

[113] The idea of suicide in the company of another, particularly in the company of a dear friend, persisted with Shelley. Cf. his proposal to Jane Williams. Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author*. 1878. i. 158.

[114] Peacock in his *Headlong Hall* (1816) informs us that this Welsh name means *waterfall*, or *cascade*. Everyman's Library Ed. 50, and 133, note.

[115] In Henry Skrine's *Two Successive Tours throughout the Whole of Wales, with Several of the Adjacent English Counties*, etc. 2nd. Ed. 1812. pp. 125–6. I find this description of the country immediately surrounding the Grove estate, together with a reference to the latter. "We soon entered that county Radnorshire and after coasting the river Eilon for several miles on a deplorable road abounding in precipices, we attained the summit of the Cwm-tythen hills, commanding an uninterrupted view over the dreary expanse we had passed, which

try of Wales," he exclaimed to Miss Hitchener, "is excessively grand; rocks piled on each other to tremendous heights, rivers formed into cataracts by their projections, and valleys clothed with woods, present an appearance of enchantment." Yet Reason must not be forgotten, even in the midst of such soul-stirring scenes; and her votary therefore asked: "Why do they enchant, *why* is it more affecting than a plane (*sic*)?—Thus [he had told Miss Hitchener this before] does Knowledge lose all the pleasure which involuntarily arises by attempting to arrest the fleeing Phantom as it passes." The letter ended by recording how a beggar having visited Field Place, Shelley had "followed him a mile, asking a thousand questions"; but the beggar proving little more communicative than the baby he quizzed on the Magdalen bridge, he had given up the attempt.

On the 25th of July he explained to Hogg that, as Timothy Shelley had discovered his son's plans for Hogg's secret visit to Horsham, and for joining Hogg at York, he had warned Bysshe that *if* he went to York he could expect no funds from Field Place. "I was forced to submit," declared the disappointed scion of the house of Shelley. Thus separated from his friend, and denied the love of the only one who could have made his residence in remote Wales tolerable, not even

exhibited extreme wildness without majesty, the mountains in this county abounding in a variety of grassy summits not unlike a species of coarse downs, but far inferior both in height and shapes to those of Cardiganshire. Still, however, the banks of the Eilon, with its attendant vallies, have their peculiar lines of beauty, and the striking example of Mr. Johnes of Havod, near Cwmystwith, has induced Mr. Grove to build a house, and form an ornamented territory, with considerable taste, in one of these deserts, which he prefers to his fine seat in Wiltshire. Except this place, the whole country appeared bare and uncultivated; nor do I ever remember a more dreary solitude than that which prevailed on the Cwm-tythen hills, where not a single tree varied the scene, and no human habitation was distinguishable. Over their gloomy hollows we proceeded in mournful silence . . ."

the scenery could cheer him. "This is most divine scenery," he admitted, "but all very dull, stale, flat, and unprofitable." [116] But there was a rift in the clouds. "I shall see the Miss Westbrooks again soon," he added, hopefully, with the information that the meeting was to take place at Aberystwyth.

The philosophy of the Preamble to the American *Declaration of Independence:* "That all men are created equal" attracted Shelley's talents to Godwinize thus to Miss Hitchener on the same day that he addressed Hogg: "You say that equality is unattainable; so, will I observe, is perfection; yet they both—demand that an unremitting tendency towards themselves should be made; and, the nearer society approaches towards this point the happier will it be." Contending that it was society which had altered the original parity between men, he declared his pity for the "unhappy aristocrat" who "by an hereditary possession of a fortune which if divided would have very different effects,—is as it were predestined to dissipation, ennui, self-reproach,[117] and to crown the climax, a death-bed of despairing inutility." As the first shot in his crusade against "the base falsehood upon which all inequality is founded," [118] Shelley declared: "The noble has too much, therefore he is wretched and wicked, the peasant has too little." This idea of the corrupting effect of wealth and power upon its possessor was elaborated in *An Address to the Irish*

[116] Cf. *Hamlet,* Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 135–5. But on the next day in writing to Miss Hitchener, he became more logical in describing the Welsh scenery, declaring: "Nature is here marked with the most impressive character of loveliness and grandeur."

[117] Supposedly arising from shame over what Shelley describes in another paragraph as "the destruction which the unrestrained propensities of this nobleman scatter around him."

[118] *Philosophical View of Reform.* 1820. 45.

People (1812) as follows: "Many people are very rich and many are very poor. Which do you think are happiest?—I can tell you that neither are happy, so far as their station is concerned. Nature never intended that there should be such a thing as a poor man or a rich one. Being put in an unnatural situation, they can neither of them be happy, so far as their situation is concerned. The poor man is born to obey the rich man, though they both came into the world equally helpless, and equally naked. But the poor man does the rich no service by obeying him—the rich man does the poor no good by commanding him. It would be much better if they could be prevailed upon to live equally like brothers—they would ultimately both be happier." But Shelley was not foolish enough to think this transformation of society could be wrought in a day. "But this can be done neither today nor tomorrow," he continued; "much as a change is to be desired, it is quite impossible." [119] "Mr. Foster," that satiric portrait of Shelley drawn from life by his intimate friend Thomas Love Peacock, is quoted in *Headlong Hall* as saying: "In short, every thing we look on attests the progress of mankind in all the arts of life, and demonstrates their gradual advancement towards a state of unlimited perfection." [120]

On the subject of inheritances Godwin had written: "Surely—it is enough to maintain men in their usurpation (for let it never be forgotten that accumulated property is usurpation) during the term of their lives. It is the most extravagant fiction, which would enlarge the empire of the proprietor beyond his natural existence, and enable him to dispose of events, when he is himself no longer in the world." [121] Shel-

[119] *Address to the Irish People.* 1812. 11.
[120] *Headlong Hall.* Everyman's Library Ed. 53.
[121] *Political Justice.* ed. 1798. ii. 444.

ley, to whom "excessive wealth" was ever "a libel on its possessor" [122] neither deluded himself into thinking that there ever had been a Saturnian age in which there had been a greater measure of equality among men, nor that the failure of the attempt of the early Christians to practice communism was a cause for despair; [123] but grounded himself on the hope that every man would, "in proportion to his wisdom," see "the manner in which it is his duty to employ the resources which the consent of mankind has intrusted to his discretion," [124] and thus annihilate "the unjust inequality of powers and conditions existing in the world; and so gradually "accommodate the progress of equality" to "the progress of wisdom and of virtue among mankind." [125] "Although you may consider equality as impossible," he told Miss Hitchener, "yet admitting this, a strenuous tendency towards it appears recommended by the consequent diminution of wickedness and misery which my system holds out." [126]

On Godwin's adaptation of Condorcet's theory of man's perfectibility, he waxed eloquent. "Ridicule perfection as impossible" he challenged Miss Hitchener. "Do more: Prove it by arguments which are irresistible. Let the defender of perfection acknowledge their cogency. Still a strenuous tendency towards this principle however unattainable cannot be considered as wrong." [127] Three years later he had not abandoned this faith. At Noé in France, Jane Clairmont set down these notes of a conversation with Shelley:—"Shelley said

[122] *Declaration of Rights.* 1812. Sec. xxvii.
[123] Cf. *Essay on Christianity. Shelley Memorials.* 1859. 286.
[124] *Ibid.* 287–9.
[125] *Ibid.* 289.
[126] Letter, from Cwm Elan, Thursday, July 25, 1811. *Letters.* i. 119.
[127] *Ibid.*

there would come a time when nowhere on the earth would there be a dirty cottage to be found. Mary asked what time would elapse before that time would come; he said, 'Perhaps a thousand years.' We said, 'Perhaps it would never come, as it was so difficult to persuade the poor to be clean.' But he said it must infallibly arrive, for Society was progressive, and was evidently moving forward toward perfectibility." [128]

Miss Hitchener requested Shelley "to dismiss for the present the subject of Religion." Shelley replied that he would, so far as its influence on individuals was concerned; but in so far as it had provoked persecutions, retaliations, martyrdoms, excommunications, wars, assassinations, massacres, mob violence, "and the State of Religious things at present" he could not be silent,[129] and these historic forms of folly yielded him a text later elaborated to a considerable extent in another essay [130] and in his first long poem of distinction.[131] He could not endure Christianity—whose divine Author had dared to say to his disciples: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"—because Christians had endeavored to establish their creed by violence, and so he wrote: "Christianity indeed has equalled Judaism in the atrocities, and exceeded it in the extent of its desolation. Eleven millions of men, women, and children, have been killed in battle, butchered in their sleep, burned to death at public festivals of sacrifice, poisoned, tortured, assassinated,

[128] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* 1886. i. 452, note; and cf. *Proposals for an Association. Prose Works* 1880. i. 384; *Queen Mab* viii. 225–7; *Laon and Cythna* iv. 1541–2; v. 2212–6; viii. 3292–4, and 3343; and *Prometheus Unbound* III. iv. 195.

[129] Letter from Cwm Elan, Thurs., July 25, 1811. *Letters* i. 119–20.

[130] *Address to the Irish People.* 1812. 2–5.

[131] *Queen Mab* vii. 205 seq.; 26 seq.; also vi. 69–71; 94–138.

and pillaged in the spirit of the Religion of Peace, and for the glory of the most merciful God." [132] It may reasonably be objected to Shelley's criticism of Christianity that the criticism was partial; that he often identified it with the atrocities of the Old Testament; that he failed to take into account the painful evolution of the race from barbarism, and the slow leavening, by the altruistic creed of Christ, of the mass of the people.

"I should doubt the existence of a God," he maintained, "who, if he cannot command our reverence by *Love*,[133] *surely* can have no demand upon it from Virtue, on the score of terror.—It is this empire of terror which is established by Religion, Monarchy is its prototype,[134] Aristocracy may be regarded as symbolizing with its very essence—they are mixed . . . one can now scarce be distinguished from the other." [135] Shelley, who was always characterized by physical and moral courage, could not abide the Wesleyan conception of Hell, which in his day was sweeping terror-stricken sinners into the fold of the "converted." Not only was he unable to believe that a beneficent Deity "incapable of malevolence and revenge" would provide such a method of punishment, but that Christ would have given his sanction to such a doctrine.[136] "If the Devil takes but half the pleasure in tormenting a sinner which God does, who took the trouble to create him," he says in a later essay, "and then to invent a system of casuistry

[132] *Refutation of Deism.* Prose Works. ii. 49.

[133] Cf. Shelley's letter to Hogg, Jan. 14, 1811: "Oh, that this Deity were the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal imperishable love!"; and the same to the same, Jan. 3, 1811: "Love, love, *infinite in extent*, eternal in duration—should be the reward."

[134] His opinions had altered somewhat since the preceding December, when he had written Hogg: "Yes, my friend," etc. *Letters* i. 21.

[135] *Letters.* i. 120; punctuation corrected from the original MS.

[136] *Essay on Christianity*, in *Shelley Memorials.* 271.

by which he might excuse himself for devoting him to eternal torment, this reward must be considerable.[137]

On the 11th of June he had informed Miss Hitchener that "*The Curse of Kehama*,[138] which you will have, is my most favorite poem—yet there is a great error—*faith* in the character of the divine Kailyal." [139] Now he told her "I am happy that you like *Kehama*. . . . Is not the chapter where Kailyal despises the leprosy grand?" [140] We shall note hereafter to what extent the reading of this poem influenced Shelley in writing *Queen Mab*.

Returning to the discussion of equality as the desirable state of man, he contrasted it with "the present aristocratical system." He found in England, he said, among the millions only five hundred thousand living "in a state of ease; the rest earn their livelihood with toil and care. If therefore these five hundred thousand aristocrats, who possess resources of various degrees of immensity, were to permit these resources to be resolved into their original stock, that is, entirely to destroy it, if each earned his own living,—then I affirm that each would be happy and contented, that crime and the temptation to crime would scarcely exist." Anticipating Miss Hitchener's objection that such an alteration in the social scheme would be visionary, he challenged her: "Why is it visionary? have you tried? The first inventor of a plow doubtless was looked upon as a mad innovator, he who altered it from its original absurd form doubtless had to contend with great prejudices in its disfavor, but is it not worth while that (altho it may not be *certain*) the remaining nine million five hundred

[137] *On the Devil and Devils. Prose Works.* ii. 393.
[138] By Robert Southey. Published, Dec. 1810.
[139] *Letters.* i. 94.
[140] *Ibid.* i. 120.

thousand victims to its infringement to [*sic*] make some exertions in favor [141] of a system evidently founded on the first principles of natural justice."

"If two children were placed together on a desert Island, and they found some scarce fruit, would not justice dictate an equal division—" he argued, perhaps with the visionary scheme of experiment in mind of which the author of *A Newspaper Editor's Reminiscences in Fraser's Magazine* for June 1841, tells us Shelley was about this time enamoured. According to this writer, Shelley "wished—to ascertain what the effect of society and a first appearance in the busy world would be upon the mind of a person brought up in solitude without religion; without other education than that which was necessary for the direction of the moral faculties, accompanied with such knowledge as would enable the individual to turn into account at a future period, but which during the course of the education would shut out inquiry on subjects of religious or social government. 'For this purpose,' said Shelley, 'I wish to find two young persons of not more than four or five years of age; and should prefer females, as they are usually more precocious than males. I would undertake to make a provision for the parents; and would bind myself to watch over the children as if I were their own father. If you can assist me in this scheme, I will withdraw from the world with my charge, and in some sequestered spot direct their education. They shall know nothing of men or manners until their minds shall have been sufficiently matured to enable me to ascertain, when brought into play, what the impressions of the world are upon the mind when it has been veiled from human

[141] This and similar words ending in *or* or *our* Shelley invariably here, and elsewhere almost unexceptionally spells *or*. Here is a text for the Simplified Spelling Society!

prejudice.' " The anonymous friend of Shelley pointed out to Shelley the risks of such an enterprise, and tells us that Shelley abandoned it "not,—because he thought it impracticable, or doubted his own power to go through it with success and honour, but *because he was unwilling to be the means of exposing two persons to the scorn and obloquy of a world which was unable to understand his motives.*" [142]

The philosophy of the last sentence, which I have italicised, may be compared with Shelley's yielding to Hogg's arguments on the subject of marriage in his letter of August 15, 1811, because of "the disproportionate sacrifice which the female is called upon to make" [143] in a union without benefit of clergy. Shelley seems also to have advanced this reason to Miss Hitchener for having abandoned his principles on the marriage question, for in her letter of October 11, 1811, she wrote, "as to *marrying* that was due to Mrs. Shelley, *with you* she might have borne the 'world's dread laugh'; but I know you could not *risk* her being deprived of your sympathy under it; by doing as you have, you have defended her against an evil which she might not have known how to sustain alone." [144] But these parallels are in a sense an excursion from the topic of Shelley's desire to set up an "experiment station" for the study of the instincts of a child, for which we have one other witness. Hellen Shelley remembered, many years later, that "He had a wish to educate some child, and often talked seriously of purchasing a little girl for that purpose; a tumbler, who came to the back door to display her wonderful feats, attracted him, and he thought she would be a good subject for the purpose— He would take his pony

[142] *Fraser's Magazine.* June 1841. p. 707. Italics mine.
[143] *Letters.* i. 134.
[144] British Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. ff. 32, 33.

and ride about the wonderful lanes and fields surrounding the house, and would talk of his intention, but he did not consider that board and lodging would be indispensable, and this difficulty, probably, was quite sufficient to prevent the talk from becoming reality.[145] Although Shelley never put his plan into practice in actual life, there is little doubt that the children Maimuna and Abdallah [146] in his fragmentary tale of *The Assassins* [147] were the imaginative incarnations of these children of nature whom but for serious obstacles he would have preferred to study from life.

Some light on Shelley's opinion of the Groves is thrown by his remark, in this letter: "I am now with people who, strange to say, never *think*. I have however much more of my own society than theirs"—and in his later comment: "I am all solitude as I cannot call the society here an alternative of it." Why he remained in such uncongenial company was early explained—"I must stay here, however, to recruit my finances, compelled now to acknowledge poverty an evil." [148]

As time passed, the scenery of Wales impressed itself more favorably upon the senses of the young apostle of Reason, who, finding its subtle influence a phenomenon beyond Her pale, strove to throw it off, but unavailingly. . . . "Nature is here marked with the most impressive character [149] of loveliness [150] and grandeur," he told Elizabeth Hitchener, "*once* [151] I was tremulously alive to tones and scenes—the

[145] Letter to Jane, Lady Shelley. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 16.

[146] Christened out of Southey's *Thalaba* and *The Arabian Night's Tales*.

[147] Written down in 1814. See *Prose Works* ii. 241.

[148] Letter to Hogg from Cwm Elan, conjecturally dated July 30 by Mr. Ingpen.

[149] Previously printed *characters*.

[150] Previously printed *lordliness*.

[151] Previously printed without italics.

habit of analysing feelings I fear does not agree with this. It is spontaneous, and, when it becomes subjugated [152] to consideration ceases to exist.—But you do right to indulge feeling where it does not mitigate with reason, I wish I could too—" And having thus partially excused his defection from the cool, unemotional devotees of Reason, he continued: "This valley is covered with trees, so are partly the mountains that surround it. Rocks, piled on each other to an immense height, and clouds intersecting them, in other places water falls midst the umbrage of a thousand shadowy trees form the principal features of the scenery. I am not wholly uninfluenced by its magic in my lonely walks, but I long for a thunderstorm." This last declaration, coming from the late ardent admirer of the Gothic romances, can be better understood in the light of the frequency with which such disturbances of nature occur in the pages of these novels. Shelley had attuned his spirit to them and his quivering sensibilities cried out for something violent in nature to match the unrest of his own soul. "This country is highly romantic," he averred to Hogg on the 28th of July, "here are rocks of uncommon heights, and picturesque waterfalls. I am more astonished at the grandeur of the scenery than I expected." Then, as if checking this enthusiastic overflow, he added: "I do not *now* much regard it; I have other things to think of."

The depth of his love for Harriet Grove is discovered in a paragraph of this letter wherein he confessed, as to his affection for her: "What I felt was a *passion.* It was, I suppose, involuntary: passion can evidently neither be disinterested, nor its opposite." But Harriet had changed, he told Hogg,—"She is not what she was." Hellen Shelley, writing many

[152] Previously printed *subject.*

years afterwards, remembered that "His disappointment—in losing the lady of his love, had a great effect upon him"; and she recalled that Elizabeth had told her "how narrowly she [Elizabeth] used to watch him and accompany him in his walks with his dog and gun." But in the view of Hellen "time healed the wound, by means of another Harriet, whose name and similar complexion perhaps, attracted the attention of my brother." [153] Peacock, who did not actually meet Shelley until the autumn of 1812, was however able to judge to some extent the results of this early rejection on Shelley; and has left a veiled version of the affair in *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) in which Scythrop (Shelley) and Emily Girouette (Harriet Grove) were prevented as the result of a quarrel between their fathers from marrying each other. Peacock says: "Scythrop received this intelligence at Nightmare Abbey, and was half distracted on the occasion. It was his first disappointment, and preyed deeply on his sensitive spirit." Subsequently Scythrop, whom the eloquence of his father on the subject of woman's slight worth had failed to impress, "retired to his tower as dismal and disconsolate as before." [154] To Mary Shelley, whose life with the poet from 1814 to 1822 gives her full warrant to speak with understanding, it seems that "His life was swallowed up in the existence of his beloved; [155] and his heart beat only in unison with the pulsations that vivified his. This was the secret law of his life—he loved and was beloved." But the tragedy, as Mary saw it, was in this: "If his heart had slept but a few years longer, he might have been saved; but it awoke in its infancy; it had power, but no knowledge; and it was ruined, even as

[153] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 18.
[154] Everyman's Library Ed. 183–4.
[155] *The Last Man* (1826). i. 57.

a too-early-blowing bud is nipt by the killing frost."[156]

The "other Harriet" to whom Hellen Shelley referred in the letter before quoted, was of course, Harriet Westbrook, who, though Shelley was at Cwm Elan and she at Aberystwyth, was not utterly cut off from communication with Shelley. They exchanged letters, and no doubt the growing warmth of their correspondence led Hogg to make some facetious remark about Shelley's feeling toward her; for in an undated letter from Cwm Elan, assigned by a recent editor[157] to July 30th, Shelley retorted: "Your jokes on Harriet Westbrook amuse me; it is a common error for people to fancy others in their own situation but if I know anything about love, I am *not in love.* I have heard from the Westbrooks, both of whom I highly esteem."

On or about August 3rd,[158] he communicated the following startling intelligence to Hogg: "You will perhaps see me before you can answer this; perhaps not; Heaven knows! I shall certainly come to York; but *Harriet Westbrook* will decide whether now or in three weeks. Her father has persecuted her in a most horrible way, by endeavouring to compel her to go to school. She asked my advice: resistance was the answer, at the same time that I essayed to mollify Mr. W[estbrook] in vain! And in consequence of my advice *she* has thrown herself upon *my* protection.

"I set off for London on Monday. How flattering a distinction! I am thinking of ten million things at once.

"What have I said? I declare, quite *ludicrous.* I advised her to resist. She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself upon my pro-

[156] *Ibid.* i. 58–9.
[157] Ingpen. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 125.
[158] The letter is undated. Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 387.

tection. We shall have £200 a year; when we find it run short, we must live, I suppose, upon love! Gratitude and admiration, all demand that I should love her *for ever*. We shall see you at York. I will hear your arguments for matrimonialism, by which I am now almost convinced. I can get lodgings at York, I suppose. Direct to me at Graham's, 18, Sackville Street, Piccadilly."

He had borrowed £10 from Hogg, in addition to £20 already furnished by that friend in order to aid him in this year of need; but he now directed Hogg not to send any more cash for he himself would "raise supplies in London."

The importance of this letter in the now-famous biographical crux which may be termed Westbrook *vs.* Shelley is such as to warrant the use of almost the complete text, as above. But it raises a number of questions, the first of which is Shelley's or Harriet's use of the epithet "persecution" in connection with John Westbrook's insistency that his daughter should return to her school at Clapham Common. Why should Harriet, or Shelley, consider this *persecution?* To answer this query it is necessary to refer to a letter from Hellen Shelley to Jane, Lady Shelley, published in Hogg's *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*,[159] in which the poet's sister revealed some of the methods employed by the proprietress of the school in enforcing discipline. "One day," she says, on a visit Shelley paid to his sisters at Clapham, "his ire was greatly excited at a black mark hung round our throats, as a penalty for some small misdemeanour. He expressed great disapprobation, more of the system than that one of his sisters should be so punished." Worse than this, "Another time he found me, I think, in an iron collar, which certainly was a

[159] Vol. i. p. 17.

dreadful instrument of torture in my opinion. It was not worn as a punishment, but because I *poked;* but Bysshe declared it would make me grow crooked, and ought to be discontinued immediately.—I was released forthwith." Had Harriet suffered such punishments? On the 24th of April preceding, Shelley had announced to Hogg: "My little friend Harriet W[estbrook] is gone to her prison-house." Nearly a month later, confiding to Hogg his impressions of the Misses Westbrook, he stated: "The younger is in prison." Both statements are further clarified by his allegations, in a letter to Hogg (probably on April 25): "Harriet Westbrook has returned thither [i. e. to the school at Clapham Common] as I mentioned. They will not speak to her; her schoolfellows will not even reply to her questions; she is called an *abandoned wretch,* and universally hated, which she remunerates with the calmest contempt. My third sister, Hellen, is the only exception. She, in spite of the *infamy,* will speak to Miss Westbrook, because she cannot see how she has done wrong." Harriet's "calm contempt" was again glanced at in Shelley's letter of May 19 to Hogg when he wrote: "Her indifference to, her contempt of, surrounding prejudice, are certainly fine."

What was this "wrong" that Harriet was held by her schoolmates to have done? It can hardly have been that her visit to Shelley in Poland Street was known; or if it were, that it would have occasioned so marked an opprobrium in their behavior toward her. Was it because she was corresponding with an atheist:

("Demand no direr name!") [160]

[160] *Prometheus Unbound.* III. i. 52.

On the 14th of March 1812, Harriet, laying bare the whole of her mind and heart in a letter to Miss Hitchener, said: "You may conceive with what horror I first heard that Percy was an Atheist; at least so it was given out at Clapham; at first I did not comprehend the meaning of the word, therefore when it was explained, I was truly petrified."

The phrase "so it was given out at Clapham" is of the greatest importance. Shelley's metaphysical notions were generally known at Clapham to be those of an "atheist." Here was cause for those who knew what the name "atheist" meant to shun Harriet. Miss Hawkes may have informed the rest of the school; for we have the evidence of one of Harriet's schoolmates, who later became Mrs. Field, to Miss Rickman,[161] that Miss Hawkes, coming into the schoolroom one morning, saw Harriet suddenly crumple up a letter "as if to conceal it from view." Miss Hawkes, of course, seized the message, read it, was properly shocked, dispatched communiqués to Shelley *père* and John Westbrook, and if Mrs. Field was not in error, went further, and dismissed Harriet from her school. "When you were a mere youth at College you took up atheistical opinions"—wrote Southey to Shelley nine years later. "You endeavoured to make proselytes to these opinions in a girls' boarding school. One of the girls [162] was expelled for the zeal with which she entered into your views, and you made her the most honourable amends in your power by marrying her." [163] Southey thus, it will be noted, supported the

[161] Daughter of Clio Rickman? Dowden's reference is indefinite enough, in truth. See his footnote, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 149.

[162] Harriet Westbrook.

[163] *Correspondence of Robert Southey with Caroline Bowles*. 1881. Appendix. 363.

notion advanced by Mrs. Field, that Harriet was actually expelled from Clapham for the offense of corresponding with Shelley. It is probable that Southey had the story from Shelley or Harriet when they visited Keswick in the autumn of 1811.

Harriet herself maintained that for a considerable time she opposed Shelley's atheistical doctrines, fearing "the goblins would get her" if she didn't "watch out," [164] and Mary Shelley later wrote in *The Last Man* of Evadne (Harriet Shelley): "Evadne entered but coldly into his [Adrian's—i. e. Shelley's] systems. She thought he did well to assert his own will, but she wished that will to have been more intelligible to the multitude.[165] She had none of the spirit of the martyr, and did not incline to share the shame and defeat of a fallen patriot." [166]

It must have been, therefore, that whether or not Harriet was actually expelled from Miss Hawkes' school at Clapham Common, the persecution she suffered was in the nature of ostracism, with perhaps also the ordeal of the iron collar, merely for receiving letters from an atheist; for she did not apparently embrace his doctrines. From such indignity Shelley, who not long since had suffered ostracism and violent expulsion from the university for failing to disavow his published utterances on religion, and who believed Harriet's

[164] Cf. her letter to Miss Hitchener, Mar. 14, 1812. Harriet's belief in a personal Devil must have delighted Shelley, who in his essay *On the Devil and Devils* (Prose Works, ii. 381–406), had laughingly regretted the decline of such belief.

[165] Mary may have been thinking of herself in this sentence. Cf. her notes on *The Cenci* and *The Witch of Atlas*, and the three stanzas addressed to Mary with which Shelley introduced the latter poem.

[166] *The Last Man*. i. 82.

persecution was born of antagonism to *his atheism*,[167] desired like some hero of old romance to "rescue" his lady fair. Harriet, though she had (if we can trust Shelley's account of this) written him "to say that—she would fly with him," and had by the same act thrown herself on his "protection," seems to have suffered some misgivings, for on August 15th, a fortnight later, Shelley informed Hogg: "My unfortunate friend, Harriet, is yet undecided; not with respect to me, but herself."

Probably it was Shelley's Godwinian views on the marriage question which gave Harriet cause for hesitation; for the moment after he reported Harriet's temporizing, Shelley began reasoning with Hogg: "The ties of love and honour are doubtless of sufficient strength to bind congenial souls—Yet the arguments of impracticability, and what is even worse, the disproportionate sacrifice which the female is called upon to make—these arguments—I cannot withstand." The latter point was again made at the close of the letter; and while the two hesitated whether they should enter into a union in which the only bonds were those of "love and honour" or should yield to

> The hoodwinked Angel of the blind and dead,
> Custom,[168]

and thus abandon Shelley's cherished position that "Antimatri-

[167] Note the immediate juxtaposition of Shelley's reference to Harriet's persecution at Clapham, his sister's championship of her, and his own hopes for Hellen: "There are some hopes of this dear little girl; she would be a divine little scion of infidelity, if I could get hold of her." In the next sentence he apparently again referred to Harriet's studies under his direction, which had included, among other works, Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. He wrote: "I think my lessons here [i. e. London] must have taken effect." Letter, undated but probably April 25, 1811, to Hogg. *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 401.

[168] *Laon and Cythna*. IV. xxiv. 4–5.

monialism is as necessarily connected with scepticism as if religion and marriage began their cause together,"[169] a week passed. Then the die was cast. Shelley had decided to submit to the marriage ceremony.

[169] Letter to Hogg, undated, but conjecturally assigned by Mr. Ingpen to May 12, 1811.

CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE WITH HARRIET

Life in Edinburgh and Keswick—Departure for Ireland.

"He could follow no other laws than the golden law of doing instantly whatever the inclination of the moment prompted."—Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* ii. p. 426.

NOW arose a difficulty. Neither bride nor groom was of legal age in England; they could not be married there. The laws of Ireland or Scotland might prove less strict. They would investigate at first hand. In the grey of an August dawn [1] they took a hackney coach in London to the Bull and Mouth Tavern in Bull and Mouth Street, whence the northern mail coach would proceed *via* York and Berwick. Embarked on the mail that evening, they met a persuasive young Scotch advocate,[2] who probably determined them to go to Edinburgh. Hogg says that this lawyer "told them how to get married;" [3] and he may also have directed Shelley to a suite of large, comfortable ground-floor rooms kept by one William Cumming, hostler,[4] at 60 George Street. On this fine new street, commanding at its intersections un-

[1] Saturday, 24th August, or Sunday, 25th August. The exact date is not known.

[2] Gilbert Hutchison? See articles on "Shelley and Dancing," *The Athenæum*, Feb. 11, 1921, p. 163; and *Nation and Athenæum*, April 16, 1921, p. 91.

[3] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 452.

[4] *The Post Office Annual Directory*, from Whitsunday 1811 to Whitsunday 1812 (Edinburgh, 1811) p. 61; "Cumming, William, furnished lodgings, 60 George Street." The same directory for 1816–17, published in 1816, has this entry at p. 62: "(Cumming, William, furnished lodgings, 13 George Street." Shelley and Harriet arrived in Edinburgh on the morning of Tuesday, 27th August, or Wednesday morning, 28th August.

60 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH
Where Shelley and Harriet lived in the autumn of 1811.

forgettable panoramas of the city, sloping downward to the sea, they established themselves with such baggage as they had brought with them.

The house in which they tarried is still to be seen; but its exterior has been altered by the addition of an extra story and the conversion of Shelley's rooms into a shop; [5] and internal changes have been made in both the ground-floor suite and that on the first floor. In the latter case, however, the changes have not been so extensive but that one may, by making a survey of the rooms,[6] obtain a fairly accurate idea of what the rooms corresponding to them on the ground floor must have been like in Shelley's day. Hogg, who seems to have been rather an exacting person, found the lodgings "good," the charges "reasonable," the meals "abundant" and "excellent" [7] at 60 George Street, but he complained of an inefficient servant, a hard mattress, and the echoing thunders of the hall and stairway. In view of the last annoyance, indeed, he decided that he had been fated "to lodge with Jupiter Tonans at the top of Olympus." [8] The only annoyance Shelley suffered, apparently, was from the shrill voice of Christie, the maid; and, of course, as soon as Hogg and Harriet discovered this, they took a perverse delight in drawing the girl into conversation in Shelley's presence.

Probably from the hostler's lodgings Shelley and Harriet proceeded directly to the house of Reverend Joseph Robertson, then pastor of Leith Wynd Chapel, one of the smaller churches described as "connected with the establishment" [9] in Edin-

[5] Occupied in 1920 by R. McDowell and Sons, bakers and confectioners.

[6] Occupied (1920) by I. Lusman, furrier.

[7] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 440.

[8] *Ibid.,* i. 438.

[9] Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae.* Edinburgh, MDCCCLXVI. Part I p. 90.

burgh. Robertson was living at this time at 225 The Canongate, in the five-storey tenement at the side of which access may be had to Big Jack's Close. "On the north side of the Canongate,[10] opposite to St. John Street, a large and lofty stone tenement bears the name of Jack's Land, where the lovely Susannah, Countess of Eglinton, resided during her latter years and was visited by Lady Jane Douglas, as appears in the evidence of the Douglas cause. The other tenants of its numerous flats were doubtless of corresponding importance in the social scale; but its most eminent occupant was David Hume, who removed thither in 1753, while engaged in writing his *History of England*, and continued to reside at Jack's Land during the most important period of his literary career." [11] "Jack's Land" appears to have been the property at 225 The Canongate. If this is so, it was a curious chance indeed that brought the young devotee of Hume to be married in the house already connected with so important a work of that writer as the *History of England*.

One can imagine the ardent Shelley explaining his desires to Robertson, urging the necessity of an immediate marriage, and perhaps enforcing his demands by assurances of a generous *pourboire* for the none-too-scrupulous clergyman. Under the laws of the Scottish Church, no minister might marry a couple unless the bride had been resident in the parish or county for a period of six weeks preceding the event, and then only after due proclamation of banns in the churches of

[10] *Post Office Annual Directory*, 1811, p. 213. The same directory for 1809–10, p. 210, gives Robertson's address as "opposite St. John Street, Canongate." (This might have been 225 Canongate.) The Directory for 1816–17, p. 223, gives another address for Robertson: "13 Carruber's Close." He was residing in this street at the time of his arraignment and trial in the following year.

[11] *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*. ii. 70.

the city on three successive Sabbaths.[12] But Shelley and Harriet had barely arrived in Edinburgh, and there had been no time for such repeated proclamation of banns. What was to be done? Somehow, a certificate attesting six weeks' residence in Edinburgh by Harriet, and previous proclamation of banns "in several churches in this city" was procured, bearing the signature of J [ohn] Fettes, District Session Clerk, and certified by Patrick Murray, teacher, and William Cumming, hostler.[13] The ceremony of marriage was then performed by Robertson, and the certificate endorsed in his hand: "The within designed Parties were married before Witnesses by me, Joseph Robertson, Minister." An entry recording the declaration of banns and Harriet's six weeks' residence was then made in practical duplicate of the certificate already described, in the small record book of the session clerk of the City Parish, and this was certified by Cumming, Murray, and Shelley himself.[14] The entry in the record book is of August 1811, but does not fix the precise date. The original certificate is dated "August 28, 1811." But in the allegation filed by Shelley in 1814,[15] on the occasion of his remarriage with Harriet, "the twenty-ninth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eleven," is set down as the time at which the first ceremony was performed.

Perhaps—but the fact that the young Scottish advocate directed Shelley at once to Robertson, I think, indicates the contrary—this clandestine marriage was Robertson's first of-

[12] Act 8, Assembly 1784; and Act of Parliament, Charles II, 1661, chap. xxxiv.

[13] Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 1917. pp. 309–10. Fettes was the proprietor of a boot and shoe shop at 56 Leith Street in 1811.

[14] The document was first published by an anonymous writer in *Chambers' Journal,* sixth series, vol. iii. p. 274.

[15] Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* p. 422.

fense. If so, it was not his last. For seven years later he was arraigned, tried by the High Court of Justiciary, and found guilty of having celebrated two other such marriages in the autumn of 1817. With his accomplice, he was banished from Scotland,[16] and demitted and deposed by the Church.[17]

Shelley seems to have had early misgivings as to the validity of their Scottish union. On 21st October 1811, he wrote to his kinsman, Thomas C. Medwin: "In the course of three weeks or a month, I shall take the precaution of being re-married." Mr. W. M. Rossetti has stated that in August 1813, Shelley having attained his majority, "his first act was to marry Harriet over again in an Episcopal chapel in Edinburgh." The information, Mr. Rossetti declared, came from "an informant exceeding unlikely to be mistaken." [18] Yet no proof of such a marriage is forthcoming, and it is almost wholly discredited by the known remarriage, which, as a result of negotiations with money-lenders, and consideration of the effect which a faulty marriage ceremony might have upon the disposition of the Shelley estates, occurred on 24th March 1814, at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, London.

What was the nature of the city in which they spent their honeymoon? Baedeker's statement that Edinburgh is "the most romantically beautiful city in Europe," true as it is today,

[16] The original documents are in the archives of the High Court of Justiciary, where a running narrative of Robertson's trial may be read in Journal E. 9, volume covering cases from 16 July 1817 to 15 June 1818. The pages of the Journal are not numbered, but the Robertson case begins at the page dated "2nd March 1818." An account of the trial appeared in the *Scotsman*, vol. ii. No. 61, p. 93 (Saturday, 21 March 1818), under the heading: "High Court of Justiciary."

[17] *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ.* Part I., p. 90. In a new edition of Scott's book (1915), the data on Robertson are more detailed.

[18] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* 1886, i. 393. Mr. Rossetti's informant was Claire Clairmont. Cf. letter from Rossetti to Dowden, 18 February 1872. *Letters About Shelley.* 1917. p. 46.

BIG JACK'S CLOSE, EDINBURGH

Where Shelley and Harriet Westbrook were married by the Reverend Joseph Robertson.

when the development of modern industry has introduced so much smoke and grime into the city as would set Ruskin weeping afresh to behold it, causes us to wonder how much more beautiful it must have been in Shelley's day, when a great part of the district in which he and Harriet resided was yet but sparsely settled and offered easy escape for long walks into the open country northward to the Forth, or eastward to Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, or southward by way of the Meadows to the Blackford, the Braid, and the still more glorious Pentland Hills. Shelley, who had been passionately fond of cross-country walks in the quieter and less varied scenery of Oxfordshire, would have revelled in long tramps here; and when not occupied with voluminous correspondence, or reading, or adventurings into the society of Edinburgh, must often have indulged this pleasure. Hogg's evidence on this point is confusing. He barely finishes protesting that Shelley would not join him in "pedestrian excursions from Edinburgh" when he says that daily "after dinner, we all went forth together, to take as long a walk as could be brought within the compass of an afternoon." [19] Probably he meant to say that Shelley, who did not wish to leave Harriet alone at this time, would not join him on one of those long rambles lasting several days, and covering several counties, which he digresses to describe in his *Life of Shelley* whenever the fancy strikes him, and whether Shelley happened to take the ramble or not.

But to all the natural beauty of scenery in and about Edinburgh I fail to find one single word of reference in the poetry of that period; nor have any later passages been definitely connected with sights seen on this occasion. This may at first seem strange; but a careful reading of his early novels and the later *Queen Mab*, to speak only of the first period of his

[19] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 463–4.

authorship, will show that he was drawing more heavily upon the Gothic romances, and the "nature poets" of the eighteenth century, than upon his own impressions of travel. By the time *Alastor* and the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* appeared, in 1816 and 1817 respectively, his method had altered; yet even in *Alastor* he owes no slight debt to Wordsworth and to Southey.

Shelley had told Hogg on the 15th of the preceding May that an arrangement had been perfected whereby he was assured of an annual income of £200 from his father. But this arrangement had been cancelled by Timothy Shelley almost immediately, and therefore when loans from Hogg and Medwin and his uncle Pilfold at length proved insufficient to cover his own and Harriet's expenses he appealed to his father on September 27th: "will you be so kind as to send me this quarter's due, to Edinburgh post office, immediately, £50." [20] The request was added as a postscript to the second letter of appeal—both were somewhat sardonically conceived and expressed—for a reconciliation.

But no relief appearing from Field Place, they must still have remained "chained to the filth and commerce of Edinburgh" [21] had it not been for the timely intervention of honest John Pilfold. He sent them another loan; and by means of it they could now effect a change of scene. By the first of October, Hogg, who had joined bride and groom in Edinburgh at the beginning of the previous month, found it necessary to return to conveyancer's chambers at York. Thither Shelley and Harriet accompanied him, the party travelling by post-chaise, and spending the first night at Bedford, the second at

[20] *Shelley in England.* 1917. 323.
[21] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Oct. 15, 1811.

Darlington, and arriving at York on the third day, probably the 3rd October, on the evening of which day Shelley addressed a letter to his father. Not until two years had passed over their heads did Shelley and Harriet again see Edinburgh.

From his new lodgings at "the dingy dwelling of certain dingy old milliners," the Misses Dancer, Coney Street, York, Shelley thought it necessary to inform his schoolmistress-correspondent at Hurstperpoint of his sudden defection from the ranks of the renovators of society. He had never mentioned Harriet Westbrook in any letter to her; he had not told her of his marriage. He still desired to continue his friendly polemical correspondence with her, and he must pave the way to an understanding by telling her all that had transpired. Therefore on the 8th October he addressed her, inquiring whether she would still permit him to call her his "dear friend," explaining that Harriet's sensitiveness to public opinion had overcome his scruples against the marriage ceremony, and that though the view which most persons took of the matter was wholly "unjust," it was "useless to attempt by singular examples to renovate the face of society, until reasoning has made so comprehensive a change as to emancipate the experimentalist from the resulting evils, and the prejudice with which his opinion—would be heard by the immense majority." He then proposed a renewal of their correspondence, assuring her that the fact that he was married would remove any suspicions from their intercourse; that she might in fact live with himself and Harriet without transgressing any article of the popular code of morality.

Miss Hitchener, save for the wistful admission that "The World on which we close our eyes at Night & That on which we ope them on the Morn, are not the same," for "changing

circumstances govern," entirely concealed her amazement at the events of the "silent interval," declared that her happiness at the renewal of the correspondence was unlimited, and expressed the hope: "never more may it know an interruption, till Death shall here at least arrest its course, willingly *I* never would forego it." As for his marriage to Harriet she generously declared: "I hope to see realized such a Union as the children of the world would tell me never existed but in my own imagination, yet such as it cannot fail to prove when united from proper motives; but," she added with unconscious prophecy, "such marriages *are rare*. The multitude that are not prompted by baser inducements are guided by vanity which disguising itself in a never ending variety of ways they become unconsciously its victims." She declined the invitation to visit the Shelleys, but only for the time being, announcing: "at some future time I anticipate accepting it."

Promising Harriet "a Sister's affection" she proceeded one step further in "leveling" Shelley to be "the Brother of my soul," and assured him that without the renewal of his friendship the "little reason" she possessed, and which in the interim had been creeping along "slowly and heavily," must certainly have "stagnated." [22]

"My dearest friend (for I will call you so)," the husband of Harriet Shelley replied, on the 15th of October, "*you* who understand my motives to action which, I flatter myself, unisonize with your own, *you*, who can contemn the world's prejudices, whose views are mine, I will dare to say I *love*—Henceforth, will I be yours—yours with truth, sincerity and unreserve." As if this were not warm assurance enough, he went further. "I love you more than any relation; I profess you are the sister of my soul, its dearest sister, and I think the

[22] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. ff. 32, 33.

component parts of that soul must undergo complete dissolution before its sympathies can perish." [23]

Yet even this forth-pouring of romantic sentiment is not less mad than the scatter-brained paragraph that followed it:

> Some Philosophers have taken a world of pains to persuade us that *congeniality* is but romance—certainly *reason* can never either account for, or prove the truth of feeling . . . I have considered it in every possible light and reason tells me that death is the boundary of the life of man, yet I feel, I believe the direct contrary . . . The senses are the only inlets of knowledge, and there is an inward sense that has persuaded me of this. How I digress, how does one reasoning lead to another, involving a chain of endless considerations! Certainly everything is connected, both in the moral and physical world there is a train of events, and tho' not likely it is impossible to deny but that the turn which my mind has taken, originated from the conquest of England by William of Normandy.[24]

After reading this we can excuse Polonius for thinking Hamlet mad! But the rest of the letter is coherent enough, and we follow Shelley's discussion of his desire for money, that he, like another Raisley Calvert, might endow those with leisure "who will employ it in the forwarding of truth"; of his uncertainty as to whether the estate, of which he was the mediate expectant heir, should be divided among his inner circle of friends—Hogg, Miss Hitchener, and himself, or among the wider circle of mankind. "My friend Hogg and myself," said he, "consider our property as common"; [25] and he declared that the coming of the day when Miss Hitchener and he might share their worldly possessions was

[23] *Letters* i. 141–2.

[24] *Letters*, i. 142.

[25] The plea for community of property among mankind was afterwards set forth *in extenso* in Shelley's *Essay on Christianity*. 1815.

a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Religion he still found "immoral"; the labor employed in rearing magnificent churches, "gigantic piles of superstition," labor wasted. All luxuries—"mahogany tables, silver vases, myriads of viands and liquors, expensive printing—worst of all," are unnecessary, and in the making of such things the labor not only, but the leisure of men is squandered in useless employment. This argument for the protection of every man's right to a certain amount of leisure in every day while he is yet not wholly fatigued and can properly employ it, was an advanced idea for Shelley's day, yet one upon which he continually insisted. We shall find him stressing it in the *Address to the Irish People*,[26] and *Declaration of Rights* (1812),[27] *Queen Mab* (1813),[28] and *Essay on Christianity* (1815).[29]

He announced to Miss Hitchener his intention immediately to "visit that mistaken man," his father, "in order to try the force of truth" upon him. For this purpose, he left Harriet in Hogg's charge at York and returned to Sussex for the first time since his marriage. The doors of his father's house not being open to the prodigal, he established himself at Captain John Pilfold's at Cuckfield on Friday, October 18th, and immediately wrote Miss Hitchener, urging her to set an early date for her visit to himself and Harriet; and to come in any case to Captain Pilfold's for dinner on Monday the twenty-first.

"I have long been convinced of the eventual omnipotence of mind over matter"; he confided to her, "adequacy of motive is

[26] *Prose Works*. ed. 1880, i. 335–6, 346.
[27] Art. xxix. *Prose Works*. i. 397.
[28] Note on v. 93, 94. (Oxford ed. pp. 897–8).
[29] *Shelley Memorials*. ed. 1859. 279–80.

sufficient to anything, and *my* golden age is when the present potence will become omnipotence: this will be the millenium of Christians, when the lion shall lay down with the lamb, tho' neither will it be accomplished to complete a prophesy [*sic*], or by the intervention of a miracle."

On Sunday, the 20th of October, Shelley called on his father, but gained no more from the interview than the information that all matters pertaining to an allowance must be discussed with William Whitton, Timothy Shelley's attorney. The same day Bysshe wrote to the lawyer, asking for an interview. This he refused to grant, stating that the case could be discussed in writing.

Meanwhile, if we can trust Timothy Shelley's feverish accounts to his attorney, the family at Field Place were "often in sad frights" with the "fancies" of Mrs. Shelley and Elizabeth, and he reported "if they heard a Dog Bark they run upstairs." All this perturbation was the result of two letters written by Shelley to his mother and sister Elizabeth, and forwarded under cover to his father. Redirected thence to Whitton, these letters elicited from the attorney vague, disquieting statements as to their diabolical contents which set goblins dancing in the imaginations of the Shelleys. Shelley, it appears, had somewhere heard that his mother was forwarding a plan whereby Elizabeth should marry Edward Graham, Shelley's sometime friend. The plan aroused his ire, and he wrote angrily to his mother. Some phrases in the letter indicate that she had recently written her wayward son; for Shelley quotes her: "You tell me that you care not for the opinion of the world — You ask me if *I* suspect you." He did suspect her of "violently, . . . persecutingly desiring to unite . . . Elizabeth to the music master Graham." In his brief note to Elizabeth he exhorted his sister to "speak the truth" if her

mother should show Timothy Shelley the damaging letter from her brother.

One other important letter that went forward from Cuckfield was addressed to his uncle, Thomas Medwin, an attorney at Horsham, and read in part: "I understand that to obviate future difficulties, I ought now to make marriage-settlements. I entrust this to your management, if you will be kind enough to take the matter in hand. In the course of three weeks or a month, I shall take the precaution of being re-married, before which I believe these adjustments will be necessary. I wish the sum [30] settled on my wife in case of my death to be £700 per annum. The maiden name is Harriett Westbrook, with two T's [31]—Harriett." No such settlement however nor any settlement was made for Harriet until 1815, until which year Shelley's own fortunes were almost continually precarious.

On October 22, Shelley went up to London, and establishing himself at the Turk's Head Coffee House, in the Strand, wrote to Whitton, inquiring as to the arrangement of his £200 allowance promised—but, as we have seen, almost immediately cancelled—by his father in the preceding spring. He urged Whitton to return "an immediate answer" as he was "in haste to quit Town for a remote part of the Kingdom." Whitton

[30] Since Shelley apparently thought £200 per annum a sufficient sum for himself to live on (cf. his letter to Hogg, May 15, 1811) his insistence here that Harriet should in the event of his death be provided with *£700 per annum* lends some colour of probability to the story by Dr. Polidori, entered in his Diary on May 30, 1816, to the effect that Shelley had "Gone through much misery, thinking he was dying; married a girl for the mere sake of letting her have the jointure that would accrue to her"; etc. (*Diary of Dr. John Polidori.* 1911. p. 107.)

[31] Hogg contradicts this, stating that he had seen many letters from Harriet and that she invariably spelled her name with but one *t*. Hogg's statement is supported by the evidence of Harriet's signatures to her letters to Catherine Nugent (Huntington Library) and to Elizabeth Hitchener. (Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496.)

was not thus to be quickened in his movements by a stripling renegade; and his reply was not written until the 24th, by which date Shelley, discouraged probably by the lawyer's delay, had proceeded to York.

Elizabeth Hitchener, in the meantime, had received Shelley's amazing professions and proposals, and had replied to them with ardour. For herself she would levy no claims upon his fortune, but she had another charity in view, and so wrote: " . . . when you come into the possession of all your fortune I will tax your friendship for the Mother of my soul, the dear woman who educated me." This was a Miss Adams, who had "kept a school seven & thirty years, but," declared her pupil, "having *too much* virtue for the age has ever been an object of persecution," she was "still compelled to continue" her teaching. She proposed that Shelley should either guarantee Miss Adams from further indigence by a direct advance of funds or support her under Miss Hitchener's roof if Miss Adams should object to a direct gift from a comparative stranger. In the most lavish terms she praised Shelley's generosity, and abjectly and by indirection begged his pardon for presenting the case of her friend.[32]

The response of Shelley was characteristic of his generous heart. "It is no generosity—it is justice, bare, simple justice" he wrote, and paraphrasing Godwin,[33] lamented: "Oh to what a state must poor human nature have arrived when simply to do our duty merits praise. Let us delight in the anticipation (tho' it may not be our lot to breathe the air of Paradise) that the time will arrive, when all that now is called generosity will be simply bare duty." She had declined his

[32] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. ff. 39, 40.

[33] *Political Justice.* 1798. i. 136. "It is—impossible for me to confer upon any man a favor, I can only do him a right."

aid; but his mind was determined: "you *shall not* refuse it. Private feeling must *not* be gratified at the expense of public benefit, by our refusal;[34] deeply would the latter suffer." In so far as she had held her own worth in disesteem, he would again invoke Godwin:[35] "It is impossible that any one should thoroughly know themselves, particularly in an instance like this where self-deciet [*sic*] is so likely to creep in from the contagious sophistications of society, and assuming the garb of virtue represent itself to you as its substance." He then proposed that the funds which he had designed for her, she should share with Miss Adams, "who I ardently long to know and love, but who must recieve [*sic*] the tribute of gratitude from you."

He was promising all this, he admitted, "at least two years before I can accomplish the projects which I have to execute." She was to tell no one of his plans. "This must be the most secret of communications," warned the young Illuminée. Next, curiously enough, he returned to the subject of his marriage, which he had first announced to Miss Hitchener two weeks before. He explained that in his endeavor to add his sister Mary or Elizabeth "to the list of the good, the disinterested, the free," he had come into contact with her friend,

[34] *Ibid.* i. 127. ". . . that life ought to be preferred which will be most conducive to the general good. Affection for one's relatives must not be allowed to determine one's channels of helpfulness." Cf. *Ibid.* i. 128: "What magic is there in the pronoun 'my,' that should justify us in overturning the decisions of impartial truth?" *Ibid.* i. 129: "Thus every view of the subject brings us back to the consideration of my neighbor's moral worth, and his importance to the general weal, as the only standard to determine the treatment to which he is entitled."

[35] Cf. *Political Justice* i. 63: "Self-deception is so far from impossible, that it is one of the ordinary phenomena with which we are acquainted,—many persons suppose themselves to be worse than an impartial spectator will find any good reason to believe them." And *Ibid.* i. 154: "Self-deception is of all things the most easy."

Harriet Westbrook; had desired immediately to "investigate" her "character"; and had at last "called on her, requested to correspond with her, designing that her advancement should keep pace with, and possibly accelerate that of my sister." Harriet had accepted his proposal, and "tho' with ideas the remotest to those which have led to this conclusion of our intimacy," he had "continued to correspond with her for some time." While he tarried in Wales, her letters "became interesting" and more frequent. "They contained complaints of the irrational conduct of her relations, and the misery of living where she could *love* no one." Ominous indeed seems to us Shelley's next statement: "Suicide was with her a favourite theme, her total uselessness urged as its defence." Her messages grew more morbid. "At length," he declared, "one assumed a tone of such despair, as induced me to quit Wales precipitately.—I arrived in London, I was shocked at observing the alteration of her looks, little did I divine the cause; she had become violently attached *to me*, and feared that I should not return her attachment . . . prejudice made the confession painful.—It was impossible to avoid being much affected, I promised to unite my fate with hers." The letter next suggests that Shelley then withdrew to Horsham,[36] where he secured a loan of £52 from the elder Medwin, though his beneficiary "was ignorant of the purpose" to which Shelley was about to apply the money, and later "expressed his regret that he had been instrumental" in forwarding the elopement.[37]

[36] The sentences following, from the letter, indicate a withdrawal from London after his first visit to Harriet on his return from Wales, and a second return to the city, *after* which the flight to Edinburgh took place. But I am by no means certain that Shelley is not here somewhat confused in his sequence of events: "I had promised [on his return from Wales to London?] at her bidding to come again to London.—She wrote to me. I came to London."

[37] The quotations relating to Medwin are from a letter of Shelley to Charles,

With inquiries as to whether Miss Hitchener had seen Southey's *Garci Ferrandez*, or read Godwin's *St. Leon* or *Caleb Williams*, the letter ends.

To orient the next letter from Shelley's pen it will be necessary to turn back a few pages of the poet's history to the spring of 1811. On the 2nd of March, he had written to Leigh Hunt: "My father is in parliament, and on attaining twenty-one, I shall in all probability fill his vacant seat." About the same time Timothy Shelley and the Duke of Norfolk collaborated in a plan to introduce Percy Bysshe to Parliament as the Member from Horsham. To this end the youthful reformer was invited by the Duke to meet himself and Timothy Shelley at Norfolk House to discuss the proposal. Bysshe accepted, but came away disgusted "at what he considered an effort made to shackle his mind, and introduce him into life as a mere follower of the Duke." [38] Expatiating on the benefits of a Parliamentary career, the Duke had told him: "You cannot direct your attention that way too early in this country; they [i. e. politics] are the proper career for a young man of ability and of your station in life. That course is the most advantageous, because it is a monopoly," together with more arguments to the same effect. But Bysshe, hearing politics and seeing politicians, only "hated it and them" [39] for their indulgence in its iniquities. "Good God!" he exclaimed to Hogg, "what men did we meet about the House—in the lobbies and passages! and my father was so civil to them all!" [40] Thus the project of a political career for Shelley failed, but it did not end his intercourse with the Duke of Norfolk.

Duke of Norfolk, from his new lodgings at York, October 28, 1811, first published in *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 20, 1858.

[38] Letter of Charles H. Grove to Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 553.

[39] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 205–6.

[40] *Ibid*. i. 207.

This *bon vivant* may have learned of Bysshe's precipitate marriage with the daughter of a tavern keeper; for he inquired of Timothy Shelley at the Bailiff's dinner on October 22nd, "very civilly about this unpleasant business." Mr. Shelley informed the Duke that the affair was now in the hands of Whitton, and directed thither by the Member from Bramber, the Duke visited Whitton for a conference. The attorney gave to His Grace Shelley's London address (the Turk's Head Coffee House) and immediately sat down and wrote Shelley to the effect that the Duke would be pleased to confer with him in St. James Square on the morning next succeeding, October 25. But Shelley had left London for York before the letter arrived, and so did not meet this appointment.

Timothy Shelley, referring in a letter to Whitton on October 27, to the interview he had had with the Duke, spoke more truth than, perhaps, he realized, when he said: "I only wish it [Whitton's advice to Bysshe] had to operate on an Ingenuous Heart and Sound understanding, but he is such a Pupil of Godwin that I can scarcely hope he will be persuaded that he owes any sort of obedience or compliance to the wishes or directions of his Parents. He will contest every point for youth is not the Season for admissions." Nevertheless, Shelley acting on the advice of his cousin, Charles Grove, appealed to the Duke of Norfolk in a letter from his new lodgings at York, to solicit his good offices as mediator between himself and his father. "I request your Grace," he wrote, "to convince my father of the severity of his conduct, to persuade him that my offence [41] is not of the heinous nature that he considers it, to induce him to allow me a sufficient income to live with tolerable comfort." Bysshe had made matters difficult for the

[41] I. e. his marriage to Harriet.

Duke by a particularly bold letter addressed to his father but two days before, in which he arraigned him on three counts, asking:

1. Did you, or did you not falsely speak of my friend [42] to Mr. J. Hogg, and as falsely assert that Stockdale the bookseller was the author of these misrepresentations?

2. Did Graham, the music master, or did he not ward off a threatened action for *libel?* [43]

3. Have you or have you not written to Mr. Hogg of Stockton letters calculated, and intended to lower my character in their opinion, opposing as in contrast your own excellencies? [44]

Leaving the Duke to prosecute the case for a *rapprochement* between the Shelleys, father and son, it now becomes necessary to investigate the state of things which Shelley found in his domestic circle on his return from London to York. In his absence, events of the gravest import had occurred. In leaving Harriet under Hogg's protection Shelley exhibited the utmost faith in his friend and fellow-collegian. But John Hogg, the latter's father, knew human nature better; and on the 21st of October, in great perturbation, had written Timothy Shelley: "I received a letter from York, stating that your son left that place (it is supposed for London) about the 18th, leaving his lady to the protection of my son, saying he should return in about a week or ten days. Mrs. Hogg and I

[42] i. e. T. J. Hogg.

[43] Cf. Shelley's letter to Hogg, May 15, 1811: "All danger about prosecution is over: it was never more than a hum"; and Whitton's letter to C. & W. Phillips. *Shelley in England.* 194. The prosecution that threatened may have arisen from the publication of *The Necessity of Atheism.* Or Shelley may have been referring to a threat from Timothy Shelley to prosecute his son for the "libel" of the report that his wife, Elizabeth Shelley, was forwarding the project to marry her daughter Elizabeth to Edward Graham. The connection with Graham makes the latter more likely.

[44] Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 352.

were greatly alarmed at this information, thinking it highly improper that they should be left together, and remembering what you said in a former letter, that you should not be surprised at your son's leaving his lady on my son's hands." He notified Mr. Shelley that Mrs. Hogg had written to Harriet, pointing out the impropriety of her situation at York, and offering to write to Harriet's friends to come to her assistance. "To this," wrote the elder Hogg, "she [i. e. Harriet] wrote a very civil answer, much in the stile of a Gentlewoman, thanking Mrs. H. for her kindness, but declining her service for the present." [45] A few days after his return from London, so Shelley told Miss Hitchener, he had "observed that Harriet's behavior to his friend had greatly altered, saw she regarded him with prejudice and hatred—saw it with great pain, and remarked it to her. Her dark hints of his unworthiness alarmed [Shelley,] yet alarmed him vaguely"; for Shelley's "alarm was untainted with the slightest suspicion of his disloyalty to virtue and friendship." "Conceive my horror," wrote Shelley, "when on pressing the conversation the secret of his unfaithfulness was divulged." [46] "Can you—conceive that he would have attempted to *seduce my wife,* that he should have chosen the very time for this attempt when I most confided in him, when least I doubted him—yet my friend this is the case." [47] To get at the truth he had gone for a walk with Hogg into the fields beyond York. "I desired to know fully the account of this affair. I heard it *from him,* and I believe he was sincere. . . . He said little, he was pale, terror-struck, remorseful." And this in Shelley's words was the account Hogg gave him: "He came to Edinburgh,

[45] Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 334.
[46] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener. [November 14, 1811?] *Letters.* i. 163.
[47] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener. [November 8, 1811?] *Ibid.* i. 155.

. . . he saw Harriet; he loved her; this passion, so far from meeting with resistance was encouraged, purposely encouraged, from motives which then appeared to him not wrong.—On our arrival at York he avowed it.—Harriet forbade other mention, yet forebore to tell me hoping she might hear no more of it." No sooner had Shelley departed from York to Sussex, however, than Hogg returned to his pleading, arguing, "There is no injury to him who knows it not. Why is it wrong to permit my love if it does not alienate affection?" But, Harriet, being loyal in her love to Shelley, not only withstood his appeals with firmness, but warned him gravely of his immorality. Hogg at this stand broke down, confessed his own villainy, and proposed to forward an open confession to Shelley. "This Harriet refused to permit, fearing its effect upon my mind at such a distance. . . . I returned the very next day."

A critic of Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, who objected to the manner in which that biographer had whitewashed Shelley's later affairs with Cornelia Turner, and his desertion of Harriet in 1814, comments on Harriet's virtuous repulsion of Hogg: "It seems a pity that Shelley did not copy this creditable conduct of hers some time or other when under temptation, so that we might have seen the author of his biography hang the miracle in the skies and squirt rainbows at it." [48] Certainly Shelley might have remembered it when Godwin in 1817 declared he had "information" of Harriet's having been unfaithful to Shelley six months before Bysshe deserted her for Mary Godwin. Instead, setting Byron a precedent for the latter's shameful "It is just like them" when there was scandal in the air in Italy respecting Shelley's rela-

[48] *In Defense of Harriet Shelley*, by Mark Twain. (Harper & Bros. n.d.) p. 9. Reprinted by permission of the Mark Twain Estate.

tions with Claire Clairmont, Shelley grasped at this straw held out by the philosopher of Skinner Street, and took it for truth, forgetting these incidents of 1811. Shelley saw that for himself and Hogg to continue their intercourse under the same conditions as formerly was impossible, at least until such time as Hogg should become regenerate. Therefore, notifying him only that they were going to Richmond, but not telling him the precise hour at which they should depart, the Shelleys and Eliza Westbrook left Hogg and York on October 29th [49] and proceeded *via* Richmond to Keswick.

They reached the latter town, in the heart of the Cumberland Mountains, on Wednesday, November 6, when he directed Hogg to address him at "Mr. D [aniel] Crosthwaite's, Town Head, Keswick." At once, on his arrival in Keswick, Shelley was admitted to artistic companionship; for Daniel Crosthwaite was a painter, and those who visit the Keswick Museum in Fitz Park today may see his finely sympathetic portrait of the celebrated geologist, Jonathan Otley, who when Shelley arrived, was living at Kingshead Yard, Keswick. There are passages in some of the letters which Shelley addressed to Miss Hitchener, during the next few weeks, which might serve to support the theory that the young poet met and talked with the geologist at Keswick, especially when coupled with the fact that Crosthwaite and Otley were evidently on friendly terms. For example, on November 24th Shelley wrote: " . . . all Nature is animated . . microscopic vision . . . might if extended, find that Nature itself was but a mass of organized animation;—perhaps the animative intellect of all this is in a constant rotation of change." On December 26th he says that he is going to read James Parkinson's

[49] D. F. McCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life. 1872.* p. 118.

Organic Remains of a Former World. But he nowhere mentions Otley in his correspondence; and we cannot be sure that they met.[50]

Whether they met or not, it was certainly in keeping with Otley's interest in geology that they should have visited Peter Crosthwaite's "museum of natural curiosities" in the village. Here, among other interesting objects, they would have seen Peter's collection of musical stones, taken from the bed of the River Greta that went "greeting" on its way through the town and out past William Jackson's "Greta Hall," where Southey lived. Shelley was, apparently, much impressed by what he saw here, for twice,[51] in letters written five years later, he refers to the museum, and to other collections like it he had seen, but at what precise date he does not say, at Bethgelert, in Wales; at Matlock in Derbyshire, and Clifton, near Bristol.

By November 12th the Shelleys and Eliza had removed, with their belongings, from Town Head to Chestnut Hill, a mile out of Keswick on an intersecting road near the Ambleside pike, where, in Chestnut Hill Cottage, then the property of Gideon Dare, they took up their residence. Literary pilgrims to England may still see Shelley's rooms in this house, which was second in a row of four single-story semi-detached cottages fronting away from the road. Their cottage commanded a magnificent prospect of the Vale of Keswick and the lakes of Derwentwater and Ullswater, shining below in a lakeland twilight like two splendid shields dropped in some primordial warfare of the Titans. Of the row of four, Shelley's was the only one with a bow-window; and the room of which this was a part became, quite naturally, his study. The

[50] For information regarding Keswick at this period I am indebted to Canon Rawnsley's *Literary Associations of the English Lakes*, 2 vols. 1894.

[51] Letters to Peacock, July 22 and 28, 1816, from Switzerland.

Photograph by Abraham, Keswick, made at the request of the author, from a drawing by Mrs Edward Irving

SHELLEY'S HOUSE, CHESTNUT HILL, KESWICK

This picture shows the properties as they were in Shelley's day. Shelley's cottage was the second from the left.

small room immediately adjoining was his bed-room. On the valley side of the cottages ran a continuous garden plot in which it was the delight of Shelley and Harriet to run about at will.

By the very great kindness of the Misses Anderson, who with their brother Dr. Anderson owned and occupied this cottage in 1920 I am enabled to present an enlarged photograph [52] of an original drawing of the properties as they were in the early part of the last century. The drawing is ascribed to Mrs. Irving, wife of the famous divine, the Reverend Edward Irving, and shows the original levels and the state of the grounds.

Opposite the Shelleys, over the head of Loughrigg Fell, rose the cloud-crowned head of Skiddaw, and about them and beyond,

> . . . intermingling mountain tops,
> In one inseparable glory clad,
> Creatures of one ethereal substance met
> In consistory.[53]

Nor was Shelley insensible to the grandeur of the Lake District of Coleridge and Southey and Wordsworth. "I have taken a long solitary ramble today," [54] he wrote Miss Hitchener on November 23rd. "These gigantic mountains piled on each other, these waterfalls, these million shaped clouds

[52] Made, at the writer's order, from the original drawing, by Mr. G. P. Abraham, Keswick.

[53] Wordsworth, *The Prelude*. x. 518–521. And cf. Shelley's letter to Miss Hitchener, Nov. 14, 1811: "Our window commands a view of two lakes, and the giant mountains which confine them."

[54] Canon H. D. Rawnsley believed that the walk here described by Shelley had been taken "up by Rakefoot, and along Walla Crag to Lodore, by the old packhorse road to Borrowdale." *Literary Associations of the English Lakes*. 1894. i. 103.

tinted by the varying colours of innumerable rainbows hanging between yourself and a lake as smooth and dark as a plain of polished jet oh! these are sights attuneable [*sic*] to the contemplation. I have been much struck by the grandeur of its imajery [*sic*]. Nature here sports in the awful waywardness of her solitude; the summit[s] of the loftiest of these immense piles of rock seem but to elevate Skiddaw and Helvellyn"; and then launching into polemics, "Imagination is resistlessly compelled to look back upon the myriad ages whose silent changes placed them here; to look back when perhaps this retirement of peace and mountain simplicity, was the Pandemonium of druidical imposture,[55] the scene of Roman Pollution, the resting place of the savage denizen of these solitudes with the wolf. . . ." Proceeding, he drew—perhaps adapting Volney's description of Palmyra—an imaginary picture of the scene "when no rocks, no lakes, no cloud-soaring mountains were here, but a vast, populous and licentious city stood in the midst of an immense plain," in some long-vanished age "ere Man had lost reason, and lived an happy happy race—No tyranny, No priestcraft, No war—Adieu to the dazzling picture." [56]

Here as always the varying "pageantry of mist" [57] and cloud appealed to his poetic fancy, and in another description forwarded to Miss Hitchener he wrote: "Oh! how you will delight in this scenery. These mountains are now capped with snow, the lake as I see it hence is glassy and calm. Snow-

[55] Had Shelley seen the vestiges of the Druid temple ("Long Meg and her daughters"), a short distance above Chestnut Hill, near the Ambleside Road; or that in Pocklington's Island, Derwentwater?

[56] The passage suggests that Shelley had been reading Volney's *Ruins, or A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires.* (Cf. 5th ed. London. 1811. ch. iv. 18).

[57] *Adonais.* xiii. 9.

vapours tinted by the loveliest colors of refraction pass far below the summits of these giant rocks. The scene even in a winter sunset is inexpressibly lovely. The clouds assume shapes which seem peculiar to these regions." [58] Perhaps this scene furnished Shelley with a hint for the lines in *Hellas:* [59]

> His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
> Are like the *fibres of a cloud instinct*
> *With light,* and to the soul that quickens them
> Are as *the atoms of the mountain-drift*
> *To the winter wind.*

Shelley's love of boating was indulged on Derwentwater; and on one occasion he and Harriet were very nearly upset, or were actually overturned in the lake, for on December 17, Elizabeth Hitchener, writing to Harriet, said: "You have made me laugh at your water excursion; but it has made me serious too, *I* cannot *spare* you & am tremblingly alive to danger, pray then be not either of you as hazardous again." [60] Was there, then, no good spirit by to utter over the heads of these two fond lovers Shelley's favorite lines [61] from *The Curse of Kehama:*

> And water shall see thee!
> And fear thee, and fly thee!
> The waves shall not touch thee
> As they pass by thee!

[58] Letter, postmarked Dec. 14, 1811.

[59] Lines 142–6. The italics are my own.

[60] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. f. 67.

[61] Medwin, *Life of Shelley.* i. 61. Medwin connects this with Shelley's admirations of 1809. But *The Curse of Kehama* was not published until Dec. of the following year. See *Morning Chronicle,* Dec. 26, 1810, for an advertisement of the poem.

In such a setting as the Lake District afforded, Shelley imagined that he, Harriet, and Miss Hitchener might inaugurate a new state of society. "Oh! give me a little cottage in that scene, let all live in peaceful little houses,[62] let temples and palaces rot with their perishing masters. Be society civilized, be you with us, grant eternal life to all, and I will ask not the paradise of religionists. I think the Christian Heaven (with its Hell) would be to *us* no paradise; but such a scene as this!" —He would write a poem about it. In it he would afford "by anticipation a picture of the manners, simplicity and delights of a perfect state of society; tho' still earthly."

> How sweet a scene will earth become!
> Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,
> Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
> When Man, with changeless Nature coalescing,
> Will undertake regeneration's work,

he sung of this change in the completed poem,[63] two years later.

Reform should begin immediately with Ireland. Miss Hitchener was expected to visit them in the summer. "We design," wrote Shelley, "after your Visit (which Heaven knows I wish would *never* end)[64] to visit Ireland." The project, he knew, was not without its dangers. "Shall I not

[62] Here Shelley anticipated the Chartists. And cf. Barruel, *Memoirs of Jacobinism* iii. 234: "Oh, Brother! what a sight! what hopes! when one day happiness, affection, and peace shall be the inhabitants of the earth: when misery, error, and oppression, shall disappear with superfluous wants: when, each one at his station labouring only for the general good, every father of a family shall be sovereign in his tranquil cot!" Such dreams of a millenium, however, are at least as old as the Old Testament.

[63] *Queen Mab* (1813) vi. 39–43.

[64] The Shelleys invited Miss Hitchener to leave them, less than a year later, after a visit of no more than three months.

get into Prison?" he asked her, perhaps as the case of Peter Finnerty crossed his mind.

A letter which Shelley received from the Duke of Norfolk, a day or two after November 7, informed him that the Duke would "be glad to interfere" on his behalf in the differences of Shelley *père* and Shelley *fils*, but "with little hope of success; fearing that Timothy, and not he alone" would "see his late conduct in a different point of view" from Shelley's. On the same day, November 7, the Duke had written to Timothy Shelley that he "would come to Field Place on the 10th, to confer with him on the unhappy difference with his son," from whom he had just had a letter of appeal. Three days later he wrote him again, and dined at Horsham, probably with Sir Timothy.

On November 23 the Duke invited Shelley, Harriet, and Eliza Westbrook to meet him at Greystoke, his country residence at Penrith. The invitation was repeated on the 26th; and on December 1st, in a storm of hail, snow and sleet,[65] the Shelleys and Miss Westbrook arrived at the ducal estate.[66] Their arrival was announced to Timothy Shelley by His Grace, who advised Percy Bysshe to write his father a letter "the tone of whose expression should be sorrow" that he had "wounded the feelings of persons so nearly connected with" himself.[67] The letter was written on the 13th of December, and was perhaps the most conciliatory one addressed by Shelley to his father from the date of the Oxford expulsion to the beginning of 1812. In it Shelley frankly confessed: "a

[65] Cf. Mrs. Howard's Journal. *Shelley's Early Life.* 122.

[66] All data on the Duke's invitations, etc. are derived from his diary, excerpts from which were published by Denis F. MacCarthy in his *Shelley's Early Life.* pp. 119–21.

[67] These phrases are from Shelley's letter to Timothy Shelley, Dec. 13, 1811.

reconciliation with you is a thing which I very much desire." He then pleaded: "Accept my apologies for the uneasiness which I have occasioned; believe that my wish to repair any uneasiness is firm and sincere. I regard these family differences as a very great evil, and I much lament that I should in any wise have been instrumental in exciting them." The only codicil which Shelley insisted upon was that he could "make no promise of concealing [his][68] opinions in political or religious matters."

Professor Dowden, who did not publish the letter, has stated that Timothy's reply to this was "written in a tone of conciliation."[69] Unfortunately the letter, which was published by Mr. Ingpen, does not help the phrase over the stile, for Timothy actually wrote:

Field Place,
Dec. 19, 1811.

Dear Bysshe,—

I am glad the visit to Greystoke Castle and the Society of that Nobleman, from whom I have experienc'd the Kindest Friendship, has had the effect on your mind, to be convinc'd of the errors you have fallen into towards your Parents.

You withdrew yourself from my Protection, after having promis'd to enter into some Professional line which you then deem'd the choice of free agency upon an allowance of £200 *per ann.*

I hope and trust everything will in due time and proper Probation be brought to an excellent work.

I never can admit within my Family of the Principles that caus'd your expulsion from Oxford. I remain, &c., T. S.[70]

[68] Shelley, of course, wrote "my."
[69] *Life of Shelley*, i. 207.
[70] *Shelley in England*. 365.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether under any definition of "conciliation" in the *N.E.D.*, Timothy's letter could lay claim to its spirit. Nevertheless, Shelley made the most of it, even going so far as to write that the letter had given him "much pleasure" by indicating that his father no longer regarded him "in an unfavourable light." He reiterated his intention to stand by his metaphysical guns, but declared "what I have said is dictated by the sincerest sentiments of respect," and expressed the hope that he might "sometimes have the pleasure of hearing" from his father, and that his mother and sisters were well. In both letters he had touched upon his financial status, in the first reminding his father that in the previous spring he had allowed him £200 per annum, with a promise that he should be "unrestrained in the exercise of the completest free agency"; [71] in the second adverting to the allowance of £200 which John Westbrook had allowed "for his daughter's subsistence." [72]

The financial relief from Harriet's father, here reported, seems to have come at a most opportune hour; for on the 30th of November Shelley had appealed in desperation to his uncle, the elder Medwin, of Horsham: "Mr. Westbrook *has sent me a small sum, with an intimation that we are to expect no more;* this suffices for the immediate discharge of a few debts; and it is nearly with our very last guinea that we visit the Duke of Norfolk at Greystock [*sic*] tomorrow." A few days before he had asked Medwin to inform him whether there was "any possible method of raising money without exorbitant interest until [his] [73] coming of age." [74]

[71] *Ibid.* 363.
[72] *Ibid.* 365.
[73] Shelley wrote "my."
[74] Letter to T. C. Medwin, from Keswick, Nov. 26, 1811.

That he did not contemplate entailing the Shelley estates—a thing finally done only under the insistence of Godwin [75]—is apparent from his letter to Miss Hitchener, December 15, in which he reported "a meditated proposal" [76] by Timothy and Sir Bysshe, to make his income "immediately larger than" Timothy's, in case Shelley would "consent to entail the estate on [his] eldest son [yet unborn] and in default of issue, on [his] brother." The suggestion was repudiated scornfully by Shelley, who asked Miss Hitchener: "do they think I can thus be bribed and ground into an act of such contemptible injustice and inutility, that I will forswear my principles in consideration of 2,000 a year; that the good will I could thus overbear would recompense me for the loss of self-esteem, of conscious rectitude: . . . That I should entail £120,000 of command over labor, of power to remit this, to employ it for beneficent purposes on one whom I know not, who might instead of being the benefactor of mankind, be its bane, and use this for the worst purposes which the real delegates of my chance-given property might convert into a most useful instrument of benevolence.—No, this *you* will not suspect me of."

Other affairs besides those connected with their finances were troubling Shelley in the garden of the north. Hogg, "the faithful friend," ordered by Shelley not to follow himself and Harriet to their new abode at Keswick, accepted the forgiving young poet's invitation to correspond with him. The result was a series of letters addressed by the conveyancer's clerk to Shelley and the wife, whom he had tried to seduce. These letters from Hogg may have numbered a dozen or so;

[75] His letter of Feb. 23, 1816, urging it upon Shelley, was sold by the Walpole Galleries in 1921.

[76] Mr. Ingpen states that there is no trace of such a proposal in the Shelley-Whitton papers. *Shelley in England*, 366, note.

all have been lost, and our only method of tracing their substance is by a study of the eight letters, garbled and disguised as they have been by Hogg in his *Life* of the poet, which Shelley wrote to Hogg in reply; and by a concurrent examination of the letters which Shelley addressed in the same period (November and December 1811) to the "sister of his soul" at Hurstperpoint.

In publishing the letters which Shelley wrote him at this time, Hogg carefully removed all date-lines; left only such vague indications of time as "Wednesday night" and "Thursday" on two letters to guide us in arranging the series; and in one case published as a "fragment of a novel" part of a letter undoubtedly addressed to himself by Shelley. Furthermore, although there exists no MS. authority for the inference, I believe that Hogg also suppressed and altered passages in the letters, or fragments of letters, that he did publish, in the same manner as we now know he altered and suppressed passages in earlier letters written to himself by "the divine Poet" whose sibylline utterances he unhesitatingly edits in an endeavor to shield himself. Medwin, who also loved Shelley, and did not betray him, would yet have proved a better hand at the business; for a Shelley scholar of preëminent repute [77] has lately testified to the "aplomb" of that biographer "in stealing fine things" and his "cognate capacity . . . for spoiling fine things when stolen." [78] But the subterfuges of Hogg, though for a few years concealed from the literary world, have now come to light; and it is possible without doing violence to Shelley's intent, to bring the published texts of these letters nearer accuracy and nearer to their original order, partly by the

[77] H. Buxton Forman.

[78] *Revised Life of Shelley,* by Thomas Medwin. ed. H. B. Forman. *Introduction.* p. xxii.

study of collateral evidence, partly by careful conjecture. Mr. Ingpen and the present writer have endeavored, in the Julian Edition of Shelley's *Works*, to arrange these letters from Keswick in their more likely original order, and have, with the assistance furnished by the letters of Miss Hitchener, assigned conjectural dates to them.

The major concern of the correspondence on Hogg's side seems to have been to attempt a renewal of the old intimacy at Keswick; and on Shelley's side to prevent this, chiefly because of the havoc which he feared Hogg's reappearance might work to Harriet's health, who had hardly recovered from the shock of her experience at York.

The end of the intercourse with Hogg now came suddenly but definitely. On the 26th of December, Shelley confided to Miss Hitchener: "Since I have answered Hogg's letter, I have received another. It was not written until after the receipt of my answer: its strain is humble and compliant, he talks of his quick passions, his high sense of honor. I have not answer[ed] it nor shall I— He has too deeply plunged into Hypocrisy for *my* arguments to effect any change. I leave him to his fate." Shelley was almost as good as his word. For nearly a year he kept his resolution. At length, on December 3, 1812, as will be seen hereafter, the correspondence was renewed; but the old intimacy was never wholly reëstablished. There can be no doubt that the fault—the grievous fault—was Hogg's. By turning Shelley's own philosophy of free love against him, he completely alienated Shelley, as Shelley was later to do for Godwin, when he entered the household of that advocate of love's freedom, and followed Hogg's precedent, with but his difference, that Shelley selected a *daughter* of the philosopher, instead of his *wife*.

A new friendship now sprang up to comfort Shelley's sad

From a contemporary print

Greta Hall, the residence of Coler dge and Southey, and where Shelley visited the latter, is now occupied by a girl's school.

heart. "We met several people at the Duke's"—he told Miss Hitchener, in a letter postmarked December 12. "One in particular struck me. He was an elderly man who seemed to know all my concerns and the expression of his face whenever I held the arguments as I do *everywhere* was such as I shall not readily forget. I shall have more to tell of him, for we have met him before in these mountains, and his particular look then struck Harriet." This "elderly man" was William Calvert, brother of Wordsworth's benefactor, Raisley Calvert. "I am going to see him," he informed his school-mistress correspondent, in a letter postmarked December 14. "I shall also see Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge there. I shall then give you a picture of them."

Shelley's expectations of meeting all three lake poets were not realized. Southey alone came in Shelley's way. They met at Calvert's residence at Windybrow near Chestnut Hill Cottage. Southey's reaction to Shelley was immediate and decided. Writing to Grosvenor Bedford, on January 4, 1812, he said:

> Here is a man at Keswick, who acts upon me as my own ghost would do. He is just what I was in 1794. His name is Shelley, son to the member for Shoreham; with 6000£. a year entailed upon him, and as much more in his father's power to cut off. Beginning with romances of ghosts and murder, and with poetry at Eton, he passed at Oxford, into metaphysics; printed half-a-dozen pages, which he entitled "The Necessity of Atheism"; sent one anonymously to Coplestone, in expectation, I suppose, of converting him; was expelled in consequence; married a girl of seventeen, after being turned out of doors by his father; and here they both are, in lodgings, living upon 200£. a year, which her father allows them. He is come to the fittest physician in the world. At present he has got to the Pantheistic stage of philosophy, and, in the course of a week, I expect he will be a

Berkeleyan, for I have put him upon a course of Berkeley. It has surprised him a good deal to meet, for the first time in his life, with a man who perfectly understands him, and does him full justice. I tell him all the difference between us is that he is nineteen, and I am thirty-seven; and I dare say it will not be very long before I shall succeed in convincing him that he may be a true philosopher, and do a great deal of good, with 6000£. a year; the thought of which troubles him a great deal more at present than ever the want of sixpence (for I have known such a want) did me . . .

. . . God help us! the world wants mending, though he did not set about it exactly in the right way.[79]

Two days later, however, in a letter to Thomas Rickman, Southey showed that he could discern, behind all of Bysshe's enthusiasms, the glint of genuine genius, for he wrote: "He will get rid of his eccentricity, and he will retain his morals, his integrity, and his genius, and unless I am greatly deceived there is every reason to believe that he will become an honour to his name and his country." [80] As for Shelley's attitude towards Southey, it was that of the poet who saw in him a "Lost Leader" of the Liberals. "Southey has changed," he reported to Miss Hitchener, on Dec. 15, "I shall see him soon, and I shall reproach him [for] [81] his tergiversation. He to whom Bigotry, Tyranny, Law was hateful, has become the votary of these Idols in a form the most disgusting.—The Church of England, its Hell and all, has become the subject of his panegyric,—the War in Spain, that prodigal waste of human blood to aggrandize the fame of statesmen is his delight, the Constitution of England with its Wellesley, its

[79] *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey.* iii. 325–6.

[80] From an unpublished letter. This passage appeared in the *Boston Evening Transcript,* Boston, Mass., U. S. A., Jan. 26, 1918.

[81] Shelley erroneously wrote *of,* not *for.*

Paget and its Prince are inflated with the prostituted exertions of his Pen." The alteration in the pantisocratic author of *Wat Tyler* was hard for Shelley to bear. "I feel a sickening distrust when I see all that I had considered good, great and inimitable fall around me into the gulf of error." Yet there was a possible excuse for Southey which Shelley hastened to offer, "His writings solely support a numerous family. His sweet children are such amiable creatures that I almost forgive what I suspect." As to the rest of the household at Greta Hall he observed: "His wife is very stupid: Mrs. Coleridge is worse. Mrs. Lovel who was once an actress is the best of them."[82]

But though Southey might prove a deserter, one hope yet remained to Shelley; for did not the schoolmistress of Hurstperpoint still pursue virtue? Pinning all his faith on her constancy to liberalism he declared: " . . . we will struggle on its brink to the last, and if compelled we fall, we shall have at all events the consolation of knowing that we *have* struggled with a Nature that is bad, and that this nature, *not* the imbecility of our proper cowardice has involved us in the ignominy of defeat."

In Wordsworth, too, Shelley still hoped; the era of the *Verses on a Celandine*, and of *Peter Bell the Third* had not yet arrived. "Wordsworth (a *quondam* associate of Southey)" he wrote Miss Hitchener, "yet retains the integrity of his independence [*sic*] but his poverty is such that he is frequently obliged[83] to beg for a shirt for his back." But near

[82] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 2, 1812.

[83] Shelley at first wrote *about*, not *obliged;* and in so saying he was probably nearer the truth of Wordsworth's pecuniary state at this time. But perhaps for a more emphatic statement, which would impress upon the Hurstperpoint devotee of virtue the sacrifices which Wordsworth in contrast with the

as he was to Wordsworth, Shelley did not meet him at this time. Nor did he meet De Quincey, or Wilson, or Coleridge. "I *might* have been of use to him," said Coleridge, many years later, "and Southey could not; for I should have sympathized with his poetics, metaphysical reveries, and the very word metaphysics is an abomination to Southey, and Shelley would have felt that I understood him." But the author of the Ode [84] which Shelley considered the finest in our language was at that time in London; De Quincey's library, "rich in the wickedest of German speculations." [85] was thirteen miles away, at Grasmere, and out of reach of the insatiable young poet-student, who might else have entered it and, as was his custom, have borne away "silently, reading . . . as he went" [86] some of its most fascinating volumes; or perhaps have sat down within it to endless metaphysical debate with the Opium Eater. Trelawny has recorded his own meeting with Wordsworth at Lausanne in 1820, when

> I asked him abruptly what he thought of Shelley as a poet.
>
> "Nothing," he replied as abruptly.
>
> Seeing my surprise, he added, "A poet who has not produced a good poem before he is twenty-five, we may conclude cannot, and never will do so."
>
> "*The Cenci!*" I said eagerly.
>
> "Won't do," he replied, shaking his head, as he got into the carriage.

On the other hand Shelley's early admiration for Wordsworth was written down in the lines from the sonnet *To Wordsworth,*

hireling Southey, had made in its interest, Shelley sacrificed the literal truth, cancelled *about* and wrote *obliged.*

[84] *France: an Ode* (1798). Cf. Medwin. *Conversations of Lord Byron.* 2nd ed. (1824) p. 163.

[85] De Quincey, *Works.* (1862). v. 20.

[86] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 156.

assigned by Professor Herford to 1815, and published with *Alastor* in the following year:

> Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
> That things depart which never may return:
> Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
> Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
> These common woes I feel. . . .
>
> Thou wert as a lone star,[87] whose light did shine
> On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
> Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
> Above the blind and battling multitude:
> In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
> Songs consecrate to truth and liberty. . . .

Southey advised Shelley that he ought not to call himself an Atheist but a Pantheist, since in reality he believed "that the Universe *is God*";[88] yet Shelley told Miss Hitchener that Southey doubted the divinity of Christ, and could not conceive "even the possibility of [the] genuineness" of Christianity. Clinging to his theory that "disinterestedness is the essence of virtuous motive," he warned the schoolmistress of Hurstperpoint that "any dogmas militating with this principle are to be rejected." Taking his cue from Voltaire, he attacked the veracity of the Pentateuch on the grounds of its incongruity with other accounts "of the aera [*sic*] of the world's existence," and

[87] Cf. Plato's epigram on Aster, translated by Shelley:

> Thou wert the morning star among the living

and cf. also Wordsworth's

> Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart (Sonnet, *England, 1802*).

and cf. *Adonais*, st. IV. It is perhaps interesting to note that Shelley translated Plato's other epigram, from the *Apology* of Apuleius, at the same time that he wrote the later Wordsworthian Elegy, the *Verses Written on Receiving a Celandine in a Letter from England*, 1816.

[88] Shelley, letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 2, 1812. *Letters*. i. 205.

the impossibility of Moses' "writing down the history of his own death." He was happy to find Southey in agreement with the Godwinian view that sin "is in effect the result of unnatural political institutions."

Referring, no doubt, to the MS. volume [89] of early verse still in the possession of the Esdaile family, descendants of Ianthe Shelley, Shelley proudly informed Miss Hitchener: "My Poems will make their appearance as soon as I can find a printer. As to the Poem [90] I have for the present postponed its execution thinking that if I can [? I must] finish my essays and tale in which I design to exhibit the cause of the failure of the French Revolution, and the state of morals and opinions in France during the latter years of its Monarchy.—Some of the leading passions of the human mind will of course have a place in its fabric. I design to exclude the sexual passion and think the keenest satire on its intemperance will be complete silence on the subject.[91] I have already done about 200 pages of this tale, and about 150 of the essays."

In the last paragraph of this letter he introduced the topic of his admiration of William Godwin, which, he assured Miss Hitchener, who on Shelley's suggestion had been reading *Political Justice*, was no less than her own for that author; and promised that he should begin a correspondence with that republican Abdiel "today or tomorrow." The promise was kept; and on the 3rd of January 1812, Shelley opened an intercourse with Godwin, the consequences of which to his life and work were of the most varied and far-reaching char-

[89] Professor Dowden was permitted to publish some excerpts from this volume in his *Life of Shelley*.

[90] *Queen Mab?*

[91] By 1820 his ideas on the topic had altered. Cf. *Philosophical View of Reform*. 52.

acter. Those who are familiar with Godwin's high opinion of his own high worth will be able to gauge the pleasure that must have been the portion of "the ridiculous philosopher of Skinner Street" [92] as he read the eulogy of himself with which Shelley opened that letter: "The name of Godwin has been used to excite in me feelings of reverence and admiration. I have been accustomed to consider him a luminary too dazzling for the darkness which surrounds him." The young enthusiast had proceeded, after this opening, to compare his own aspirations and sufferings with those of his mentor. "My course has been short, but eventful," he declared to Godwin. "I have seen much of human prejudice, suffered much from human persecution, yet I see no reason hence inferrible [*sic*] which should alter my wishes for their renovation. The ill treatment I have met with has more than ever impressed the truth of my principles on my judgment."

Godwin replied at once,[93] but unfortunately the letter has been lost. However, it is possible from Shelley's reply to the missing letter, to reconstruct its general trend of thought. Godwin complained of the "generalizing character" of Shelley's letter, and of the fact that by reason of this flaw in style Shelley was "not an individual character" to him. Shelley immediately got over this difficulty by setting forth his history, which he related with such an admixture of fact and fiction as might be expected of a young romancist eager to impress the older "veteran" of their common experience of "persecution," and their actual kinship of thought and experience. Among his misstatements of fact may be cited his declaration that he "was twice expelled" from Eton; that his father "ever" re-

[92] This rôle is assigned to Godwin by A. Edward Newton in his delightful essay of that title in *The Amenities of Book Collecting.* (1920)

[93] In his diary on Jan. 6, 1812, Godwin entered: "Wrote to Shelley."

garding him "as a blot, a defilement of his honour" had wished "to induce [him] by poverty to accept of some commission in a distant regiment," and in the interim—"to prosecute the [Oxford] pamphlet, that a process of outlawry might make the estate, on his death, devolve to Bysshe's younger brother [John Shelley, born 1806]."

Shelley revealed the fact to Godwin that he was busily engaged in writing "An inquiry into the causes of the failures of the French Revolution to benefit mankind." He would "not again obtrude the question of atheism on the world," but he asked Godwin whether he might not "at the same time, improve his own powers and diffuse true and virtuous principles?" [94] Godwin's letters seemed to Shelley to "mirror—a firm and elevated mind," the outpourings of one in whom "the unmoderated enthusiasm of philanthropy" [95] still [96] burned with undiminished ardor.

In the letter to Miss Hitchener from which the latter quotations are drawn, Shelley has fortunately imbedded a long quotation from one of Godwin's lost letters of this period of their correspondence from which we may gain some more vivid notion of Godwin's attitude towards his eager young disciple. "At present," he wrote Shelley, in a letter antedating the 20th of January, "I feel for you all those motives of interest that can be crowded into the case of a young man I never saw. First, you appear to be in some degree the pupil of my writings, and I feel so far as if I were in a manner responsible for your conduct. Secondly, from your account of what you have done tho' nothing you have written has

[94] Letter to Godwin. Jan. 16, 1812.

[95] Formerly printed *humanity;* but the MS. gives *philanthropy.*

[96] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener postmarked Jan. 20, 1812, but probably written two or three days earlier; for it contains no reference to the events of the evening of Jan. 19.

fallen in my way I cannot but conclude that you possess extraordinary powers. Thirdly, as a man of family born to a considerable fortune it is of the more importance how you conduct yourself, for money is one of the means a man may posess [*sic*] of being extremely useful to his species." It would perhaps be too unkind to the memory of Godwin to hazard the guess that the third point thus advanced was the point which interested him the most—the fact that Shelley was the heir, once removed,[97] to great possessions. Certain it is that no earlier than November 29, 1812, Godwin suggested to Francis Place that if by August 1813, he (Godwin) should not succeed in extricating himself from financial difficulties, he would deliberate maturely, and either give up "his bookselling concern altogether, or firmly call on" his "young friend to assist" him, "to the extent, whatever it is, that shall render his assistance effectual." [98] The "young friend" as Place elsewhere makes clear, was Percy Bysshe Shelley. Godwin assured Shelley, in the first month of their intercourse, that he had a "deep and earnest interest" in his "welfare"; warned him against indulging anger against his father, and counselled: "Being yet a scholar, you ought to have no intolerable itch to become a teacher." [99] Shelley in reply heartily welcomed Godwin's assumption of interest in his concerns, said that he had "ever been desirous of a reconciliation" with his father, but that "the price" which the latter demanded was "a renunciation of his opinions, or—a subjection to conditions which [would] bind [him] to act in opposition to their very spirit."

[97] Mr. Ingpen states in his *Shelley in England* that the precise position of Shelley with respect to his grandfather's estate was that of "tenant in tail male in remainder expectant on the death of his grandfather and father."

[98] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 35, 145. ff. 37 r., 37 v. See Appendix.

[99] Quoted, letter of Shelley to Godwin, Jan. 16.

"I consider the state of Ireland [capable] [100] of constituting a part of a great crisis in opinions," Shelley said to Miss Hitchener, in a letter postmarked 20th January 1812, and he advised her that at that time he was "writing an address to the poor Irish Catholics" from which he quoted an early draft of the sentences beginning ". . . think for your children, and your children's children" and ending "to answer his own paltry and narrow ambition." [101] At this time Shelley intended to have the address "printed in large sheets to be stuck about the walls of Dublin." This idea was not carried out as to *An Address to the Irish People*, but was applied to the printing and dissemination of the Declaration of Rights, published simultaneously.

Introducing Miss Hitchener to an early draft of the verses afterwards published—probably in Dublin, and at any rate about 1812—as *The Devil's Walk: a Ballad*, Shelley remarked: "I was once rather fond of the Devil." This fondness we may safely aver was a phenomenon of the days when *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian* were taking shape in his mind; when he found in romances like *Zofloya, or the Moor*, in which the Devil is a prominent character, "a way to escape from the harsh relations and dull routine of ordinary existence." [102] But Shelley never entirely got away from the fascination of Satan, for the prose essay *On the Devil and Devils* and the poem of *Peter Bell the Third* (written 1819; published 1839) show that the Devil in later years still attracted him as a subject for discussion; and there are passing references to His Satanic Majesty in *The Cenci, Charles the*

[100] Some such word seems necessary to fill out the sense of the sentence, which in the MS. is ungrammatical otherwise.

[101] *Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ed. 1912. i. 228–9.

[102] Edith Birkhead. *The Tale of Terror: a Study of the Gothic Romance* (1921) pp. 118–19.

First, the *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, and *Œdipus Tyrannus;* and in *Rosalind and Helen* a mention

Of devils and saints and all such gear,

which indicates the purposes to which from 1812 onward, Shelley employed the Devil—for political satire, or to promote disbelief in the identity of this character.

Disgusted with Southey's desertion of the forces of liberalism, Shelley informed Miss Hitchener crisply on or about January 17: "I hasten to go to Ireland." But before the letter in which he wrote that was ended, he had admitted his financial distresses, reported the loan of £50 promised by his uncle Pilfold, and his own request to the Duke of Norfolk for £100, announcing: "if the Duke complies, we shall be very rich. I shall likewise make money in Ireland. All the money I get shall be squeezed out of the rich." The manner in which the astonishing extraction would take place was immediately explained. "The poor cannot understand and wd. not buy my poems; therefore I shall print them expensively. My metaphysics will be also printed expensively,—the first edition that is (I am vain enough to hope for a second.)" [103]

An experience calculated to terrify the Shelleys and impel them to change their residence was the next portion dealt them by the fates. The winter of 1811–12 had been distinguished, in and about Keswick, by numerous robberies, the hold-up of the Keswick mail, and other startling events of a similar order. So alarmed had the country-side become, in fact, that the pacific Southey thought it a piece of wisdom to keep a shotgun

[103] The only work of Shelley's which went into an authorized second edition within his lifetime was the tragedy of *The Cenci* (first ed. Italy, 1819; second ed. London, 1821). *Queen Mab* and *Adonais* were published in *de luxe style*. A pirated edition of *Queen Mab* appeared in 1821.

loaded and ready for intruders at Greta Hall. Chestnut Hill, situated as it was at a considerable distance from the heart of Keswick, was a tempting prize for some ruffians who on the night of Sunday, January 19, descended upon it either with the intent of breaking a way into the house or of assaulting Shelley and searching the cottage for loot. Hearing an odd disturbance outside, Shelley, who on this and many other occasions in later life displayed an utter absence of fear, opened the door, only to be felled by a blow from one of the robbers which left him senseless. At this point, fortunately for all concerned, stout Gideon Dare, Shelley's landlord, who was residing in the upper cottage at the end of the garden, came armed to his assistance, and the invaders at sight of him fled precipitately without securing their booty. An account of the event appeared in *The Cumberland Pacquet*, published at Whitehaven, for January 28, 1812; and both Shelley and Harriet referred to it in letters to Miss Hitchener; yet in this case as often afterwards there were not lacking those who insisted that the attack was one of Shelley's "delusions."

On the 26th of January Shelley was able to announce that his father had at last yielded to his entreaties and granted him £200 a year, but "with the Compliment," Shelley added, "that he did it to *prevent my cheating strangers.*" The first payment of £100 was momently expected from Whitton, and on its arrival they would set off for Ireland. Their project had awakened varying responses in the hearts of their Keswick acquaintances. "Southey regrets our going," wrote Shelley. "The Calverts were very much against it, nay all of them violently except Mrs. C[alvert] who wishes us success heartily. We *shall* have success: I am perfectly confident of the impossibility of failure."

Two days later he confided to Godwin the nature of the

pamphlet with which he intended to open in Ireland the campaign for universal toleration. "I know it can do no harm"; he insisted, "it cannot excite rebellion, as its main principle is to trust the success of a cause to the energy of its truth. It cannot 'widen the breach between the kingdoms,' as it attempts to convey to the vulgar mind sentiments of universal philanthropy, and whatever impressions it may produce, they can be no others but those of peace and harmony; it owns no religion but benevolence, no cause but virtue, no party but the world."

On "Wednesday" (probably January 29) he invited Miss Hitchener to come and live with himself, Harriet, and Eliza. "I perceive in you the embryo of a mighty intellect," he continued, "which may one day enlighten thousands." Of what they unitedly might accomplish for the regeneration of the world, he had high hopes. But hitherto his health had been a drawback to the accomplishments of those splendid plans for the redemption of man which were the very life-blood of his spirit. Thus early the fear of untimely death,[104] death that might preclude the fulfilment of his schemes oppressed him heavily and led him to exclaim: "Oh, my dearest friend when I think of the uncertainty and transitoriness of human life and its occupations, when I consider its fleeting prospects and its fluctuating principles, how desirous am I to crowd into its sphere as much usefulness as possible.—We have but a certain time allotted to us in which to do its business, how much does it become us to improve and multiply this time and to regard every hour neglected misspent or unimproved as

[104] This was to spur him later to hasten through to completion *Laon and Cythna; or the Revolution of the Golden City* as a sort of last will and testament to humanity. Cf. his letter to Godwin, Dec. 11, 1817: "I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself," etc.

so much lost to the cause of virtue liberty and happiness." [105]

But he was abridging his brief span of years by indulgence in the laudanum habit. This he did not without compunction; for he promised Miss Hitchener: "I hope to be compelled to [have] recourse to laudanum no more. My health is re-established and I am now strong in mind and nerve." Shelley's use of drugs as a means of alleviating those sudden attacks of spasmodic pain, was not, unfortunately, abandoned in 1812, for at a later day he still sought surcease from suffering in its Lethean draughts; [106] and although as Professor Dowden has stated, Shelley was not "a drinker of laudanum, except on rare occasions when suffering some acute physical or mental anguish" [107] the evidence of Peacock and Mrs. Godwin [108] shows that in those periods he took heavy doses, and once all but lost his life as the result of an overdose. As late as June 18th, 1822, we find him asking Trelawny to secure for him a small quantity of that most fatal poison, "Prussic Acid, or Essential Oil of Bitter Almonds" that he might have in his possession, for use at any moment, "that golden key to the

[105] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 29, 1812. *Letters.* i. 245.

[106] Peacock, describing the state of Shelley's mind after the latter's meeting with Mary Godwin, but before he eloped with her, deserting Harriet, says: "He caught up a bottle of laudanum and said, 'I never part from this.'" To this account Peacock adds as a footnote: "I believe that up to this time he had never travelled without a pistol for defence, nor without laudanum as a refuge from intolerable pain." (*Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley* in *Works*, 1875, iii. 417–18.) Mrs. Godwin has left it on record that in the first week of July 1814, Shelley endeavored to induce Mary to commit suicide with him—she, by taking laudanum, a phial of which he offered to her; he, by a shot from the pistol he carried with him. Mrs. Godwin also records that they heard later how Shelley "had taken a violent dose of laudanum, and was lying at death's door." They hastened to Shelley's rooms in Hatton Garden and "found Shelley in the hands of a doctor, who was forcing him to walk up and down the room."

[107] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 550.

[108] *Ibid.* ii. 544.

chamber of perpetual rest." [109] Those folk who seek an easy interpretation of the difficulty of some of Shelley's poetry will find their cue in these circumstances, and will be in their conclusions as far as it is possible to be from the truth of the matter they seek to explain; for the heart of his mystery is not thus to be plumbed.

By February 3, 1812, Shelley, Harriet, and Eliza had quitted Keswick and the mountains of Cumberland and were at Whitehaven, bound for Ireland. Here in a town Shelley found "filthy," and in a "horrible Inn," they waited the midnight departure of the packet which was to bear them to the Isle of Man. There follows a gap of a full week during which we know little of the fortunes of the travellers save the fact that the slate-galliot on which they embarked from Douglas was "driven by a storm quite to the North of Ireland," and that on February 12, weary with delays and a rough passage, they arrived at last in Dublin.

[109] Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.* pp. 100–1.

CHAPTER VII

IRELAND AND DEVON

Address to the Irish People—Desire for Catholic Emancipation—Eaton's Case

IN 1793 the Crown had passed the Convention Act for Ireland, which declared all committees or assemblies unlawful which had been appointed to represent the people, "under pretence of petitioning" for any alteration in matters established by law in Church or State. From that year until 1812, when Shelley first arrived in Ireland, the Act had been a mooted cause of trouble. Just before the "self-constituted steward of universal happiness" [1] reached Dublin, a convicted delegate was sentenced for his misdemeanor in attending a meeting of the Catholic Committee. The Committee itself was scattered; and the promise of peace between the warring factions, which in the middle and later part of 1811 had been considerable, faded and grew dim.

"I must judge of people as I see them"; Shelley says, in the pamphlet [2] published a fortnight after he reached Dublin, "the Irish Catholics are badly used." To them directly he declared: "You are not blind to your situation; you are villainously treated; you are badly used. That this slavery shall cease, I will venture to prophesy. Your enemies dare not to persecute you longer, the spirit of Ireland is bent, but it is not broken, and that they very well know." The new freedom should be limited only by the boundaries of the earth itself. "Oh, Ireland! thou emerald of the ocean, whose sons

[1] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Feb. 24, 1812.

[2] *An Address / to the / Irish People.* / by Percy Bysshe Shelley / [Advertisement] / Dublin / 1812 / Price—5 d. / .

are generous and brave, whose daughters are honourable and frank and fair, thou art the isle on whose green shores I have desired to see the standard of liberty erected—a flag of fire—a beacon at which the world shall light the torch of Freedom!" [3]

From his lodgings at the house of Mr. Dunn, a woollen draper, Shelley and Harriet disseminated copies of the *Address* which was "to familiarize to uneducated apprehensions ideas of liberty, benevolence, *peace*, and toleration," and was "secretly intended also as a preliminary to other pamphlets to shake Catholicism at its basis, and to induce Quakerish and Socinian principles of politics." [4] Harriet, who did not lack a sense of humor, though she might sympathize with Shelley's efforts as a philanthropist, confided to Miss Hitchener: "I'm sure you would laugh were you to see us give the pamphlets. We throw them out of the window, and give them to men that we pass in the streets. For myself," added Harriet, "I am ready to die of laughter when it is done, and Percy looks so grave; yesterday he put one into a woman's hood of a cloak. She knew nothing of it, and we passed on. I could hardly get on, my muscles were so irritated." [5]

Beginning with an announcement that: "Those are my brothers and my countrymen who are unfortunate," Shelley in his *Address to the Irish People*, proceeded to disclaim any intention on his part of advocating or inciting violence in Ireland (here he ran true to the Godwinian philosophy), said he desired "to moderate" but not "to root out" the "warm feelings of an Irishman" who contemplated the misery and sufferings of his country. As for the Roman Catholic religion

[3] *Prose Works.* ed. 1880 i. 322.
[4] Shelley, letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, January 26, 1812. *Letters* i. 236.
[5] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, February 27, 1812.

he indorsed Paine's view, that "all religions are good which make men good; and the way that a person ought to prove that his method of worshipping God is best, is for himself to be better than all other men." [6] Declaring that he was neither Protestant nor Catholic, Shelley then recounted the persecutions and counter-persecutions that had gone on between these two, and expressed his conviction that the persecutors "might have found that fighting and killing men, and cursing and hating them, was the very worst way for getting into favour with a Being who is allowed by all to be best pleased with deeds of love and charity."

With a bland unconsciousness of the humor of his position, he next proved to the priest-ridden Irish that Catholic prelates had in times past been unspeakably corrupt, lovers of power and prestige, warned them against those persons who advised them to divulge secrets "to one particular set of men," and admonished them, that as "the monks and priests of old were very bad men," they should "take care" that "no such abuse their confidence again." "Can there be worse slavery," he inquired of the Irish Catholics, "than the depending for the safety of your soul on the will of another man?" As for religious observances, "It is not paying priests or believing in

[6] Cf. Shelley's letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 20, 1812: "Is one man more favored than another by God? No if God makes any distinction they are favored according to the good they do, not according to the rank or profession they hold. God loves a poor man as well as a priest." This was afterwards incorporated in the *Address to the Irish People* (*Prose Works*, ed. 1880. i. 321). Cf. also *Ibid.* i. 324: "The only use of a religion that ever I could see, is to make men wiser or better; so far as it does this, it is a good one"; and *Ibid.* i. 326: "—the religion is best whose members are the best men," and *Ibid.* i. 353: "every religion is right and true, which makes men beneficent and sincere." Cf. Paine, *Rights of Man* ed. 1817. II. v. 107: "Every religion is good that teaches man to be good"; and *Agrarian Justice* ed. 1817. p. 3: "Practical Religion consists in doing good; and the only way of serving God is, that of endeavoring to make his creation happy."

what they say that makes a good man," he told them, "but it is doing good actions or benefiting other people; this is the true way to be good, and the prayers and confessions and masses of him who does not these things are good for nothing at all." He believed that Catholic Emancipation, and the restoration of the liberties and happiness of Ireland, so far as they were compatible with the English Constitution, were "great and important events" and hoped to see them realized "soon," for he confessed that if all ended here, it would afford him little satisfaction. "I should still see thousands miserable and wicked; things still—wrong. I regard—the accomplishment of these things as the road to a greater reform, that reform after which virtue and wisdom shall have conquered pain and vice—when no government will be wanted but that of your neighbor's opinion."

Those who from time immemorial had been taught to believe in the infallibility of dogma, heard with amazement this young Englishman's assertion that: "Nothing on earth is infallible. The priests that pretend to it are wicked and mischievous impostors." They heard further, in the *Proposals for an Association,* published a few days later, that "the claims of the Catholic inhabitants of Ireland, if gained tomorrow, would in a very small degree aggrandize their liberty and happiness." Since "the disqualifications principally affected the higher orders of the Catholic persuasion," Shelley believed that these men only "would principally be benefited by their removal." He was prejudiced against the power and wealth of these men, in so far as they were obstacles to the advance of "virtue and freedom." But he expressed himself as "happy—at the near approach of this emancipation," because he was "inimical to all disqualifications for opinion." He was interested in it only as a step to that universal liberation when

"the eyeless monster Bigotry, whose throne has tottered for two hundred years" should cease to hold dominion over the mind of man, and "the palsied beldame Superstition" should go to her grave. The "palsied beldame Superstition" was of course, for Shelley the Catholic faith.[7]

If justification for such rashness is sought elsewhere in Shelley's work it will be found in this sentence in *A Philosophical View of Reform* (1820): "The patriot will be foremost to publish the boldest truths in the most fearless manner, yet without the slightest tincture of personal malignity. He would encourage all others to the same efforts and assist them to the utmost of his power with the resources both of his intellect and fortune. He would call upon them to despise imprisonment and persecution and lose no opportunity of bringing public opinion and the power of the tyrants into circumstances of perpetual contest and opposition." [8]

Not content with writing and publishing his views of the Irish question, Shelley must do more. He must leap into the very center of controversy and endeavor to win those by the spoken word who might not have read, or who might not have been stirred by reading, his previous *pronunciamento*. Therefore on the 28th of February we behold him addressing the Aggregate Meeting of Roman Catholics at Fishamble Street Theatre. Speaking on the sixth resolution [9] proposed to the convention, Shelley spoke "for more than an hour." [10] According to *The Freeman's Journal*, February 29, 1812, "He was received with great kindness," [11] and although Shelley

[7] In Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary, the article "Superstition" was devoted to an attack on dogmas of the Catholic church.

[8] *Philosophical View of Reform.* 1820. p. 82.

[9] Cf. MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life*, p. 247 for text of this resolution.

[10] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Mar. 14, 1812. *Letters* i. 282.

[11] Quoted, MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life.* p. 240.

himself admitted that his references to the Catholic Church had brought forth some hisses, he added that these "were mixed with applause" when he "avowed [his] mission."

In *Saunders' News Letter* of Saturday, February 29, 1812, appeared this resumé [12] of this first speech of the young poet-philanthropist:

Mr. Shelley then addressed the chair. He hoped he should not be accounted a transgressor on the time of the meeting. He felt inadequate to the task he had undertaken, but he hoped the feelings which urged him forward would plead his pardon. He was an Englishman; when he reflected on the outrages that his countrymen had committed here for the last twenty years he confessed that he blushed for them. He had come to Ireland for the sole purpose of interesting himself in the misfortunes of this country, and impressed with a full conviction of the necessity of Catholic Emancipation, and of the baneful effects which the union with Great Britain had entailed upon Ireland. He had walked through the fields of the country and the streets of the city, and he had in both seen the miserable effects of the fatal step. He had seen that edifice which ought to have been the fane of their liberties converted to a temple of Mammon. Many of the crimes which are daily committed he could not avoid attributing to the effect of that measure, which had thrown numbers of people out of the employment they had in manufacture, and induced them to commit acts of the greatest desperation for the support of their existence.

He could not imagine that the religious opinion of a man should exclude him from the rights of society. The original founder of our religion taught no such doctrine. Equality in this respect was general in the American States, and why not here? Did a change of place change the nature of man? He would beg those in power to recollect the French Revolution: the suddenness, the violence

[12] *Ibid.* p. 242–3. Another account of almost equal length appeared in *The Dublin Evening Post* of the same date.

with which it burst forth, and the cause which gave rise to it.

Both the measures of Emancipation and a Repeal of the Union should meet his decided support, but he hoped many years would not pass over his head when he would make himself conspicuous at least by his zeal for them.

Trelawny's observations on Shelley's power as a public speaker are, in this connection, of special interest, and will bear repeating. "It was not until he spoke that you could discern anything uncommon in him—but the first sentence he uttered, when excited by his subject, riveted your attention. The light from his very soul streamed from his eyes, and every mental emotion of which the human mind is susceptible, was expressed in his pliant and ever-changing features. It left the conviction on the minds of his audience, that however great he was as a Poet, he was greater as an Orator." [13] Or compare Mary Shelley's description of him: "His slight figure, his fervent look, his gesture, more of deprecation than rule, were proofs that love, unmingled with fear, gave him dominion over the hearts of a multitude, who knew that he never flinched from danger, nor was actuated by other motives than care for the general welfare." [14] Even Medwin says, of the Irish expedition, "He attended some public meetings, where he displayed that eloquence for which he was remarkable, and which doubtless would have distinguished him, had he embarked in a political career in the Senate." [15] Of all Shelley historians Hogg alone is utterly unreliable in the account he gives [16] of the Irish operations. He treats the

[13] *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron,* by E. J. Trelawny. 1858. pp. 140–1.

[14] As "Adrian," in *The Last Man.* iii. 150.

[15] *Revised Life of Shelley.* pp. 113–14.

[16] *Life of Shelley.* ii. 108 and following.

whole effort as a farce and a gesture. Yet, granting that the "mission" effected little of immediate good for the suffering people of Ireland, and that a Tory politician such as Hogg would not have followed in the course prescribed by this address, there are too many corroborative evidences of Shelley's own faith in his doctrine to admit of the judgment to which Hogg's cynical finger points. But, until we set aside the *two* Irish pamphlets, the *two* broadsides—*Declaration of Rights* and *Devil's Walk*, shortly to be discussed—*Letter to Lord Ellenborough, Queen Mab, The Refutation of Deism, Laon and Cythna*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, which verify Shelley's position with respect to the questions broached in the Fishamble Street Theatre on that day; and unless we burn his letters, we must reject Hogg's charges as "the baseless fabric of a vision."

It is known [17] that the aggregate meeting was spied upon by two Government reporters, who furnished special reports of the events of that evening to "the courtiers of Dublin Castle." [18] But Shelley is mentioned in but one of these, and the mention is of the most casual sort. So, though Shelley had written Miss Hitchener [19] that "the tyrants" might coop him up in some dark dungeon for this openness of behavior and speech on subjects so vital to the peace of the empire, he seems not to have aroused the official watchdogs who heard his speech. But at this time there were not lacking Irishmen who had suffered and were still suffering for their independence of thought and expression on the Irish prob-

[17] Cf. MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life*. p. 238.

[18] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 26, 1812. *Letters* i. 237. I am informed by the courteous Keeper of the Records, Public Record Office, Dublin, that no stenographic report of Shelley's speech is to be found among the records at that office.

[19] Letter, Dec. 11, 1811. *Letters* i. 193.

lem; and the case of one of these had interested Shelley for a year past.

Peter Finnerty, an Irish journalist, had incurred the anger of Lord Castlereagh by publishing a letter in *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Statesman* protesting against his recall from the "Walcheren expedition"—the expedition which, as a modern historian puts it, made England "the laughing stock of Europe." [20] Castlereagh immediately directed the Attorney-General to file an information for libel against Finnerty. On February 7, 1811, he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment in Lincoln Gaol. His cause was championed by Leigh Hunt's journal, *The Examiner*,[21] and it is not unlikely that Shelley had been following the case through the columns of that newspaper. At any rate, he seized the present opportunity to tell the Irish: "A countryman of yours is now confined in an English gaol. His health, his fortunes, his spirits suffer from close confinement. The air which comes through the bars of a prison-grate does not invigorate the frame nor cheer the spirits. But Mr. Finnerty, much as he has lost, yet retains the fair name of truth and honour. He was imprisoned for persisting in the truth." In March 1811, Shelley, then a student at University College, Oxford, had subscribed a guinea to a fund being raised for the relief [22] of this victim of oppression. That his interest in the case persisted for that period of time is at least a partial refutation of the charge sometimes made against Shelley, that his loyalties were never deep-rooted or enduring.

As the prosecution of Finnerty had raised the issue, Shelley launched into a defence of freedom of the press. "The lib-

[20] C. Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*. 1911. p. 440.
[21] In issues of February 17 and 24, 1811.
[22] *Oxford Herald*, Saturday, March 2, 1811.

erty of the Press," he declared, "consists in a right to publish any opinion on any subject which the writer may entertain." But at this time, Shelley believed there was "no liberty of the Press for the subjects of British government." The situation provoked an elaboration of the plan suggested by Leigh Hunt in Shelley's letter of March 2, 1811, already quoted, and this was presented at length in the pamphlet, *Proposals for an Association of Those Philanthropists, Who Convinced of the Inadequacy of the Moral and Political State of Ireland to Produce Benefits Which are Nevertheless Attainable, are Willing to Unite to Accomplish its Regeneration.* This second Irish pamphlet appeared, curiously enough, on the first anniversary of this letter to Hunt (March 2, 1812).[23]

The "immediate objects" of this association were openly avowed as "Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the Act of Union Between Great Britain and Ireland"; and through these "an annihilation or palliation of whatever moral or political evil it may be within the compass of human power to assuage or eradicate." Of the two reforms first mentioned he considered the second of infinitely greater importance, for was it not true that it "impoverishes the peasant, adds beggary to the city, famine to the country, multiplies abjectness, whilst misery and crime play into each other's hands under its withering auspices?" The English peers in Ireland he found little better than vampyres who "suck the veins of its inhabitants and consume the blood in England." [24]

[23] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, February 27: "On Monday [i. e. Mar. 2] my next book makes its appearance."

[24] This reference to vampyres has a considerable interest from the possibility of its bearing on the choice by Byron and Polidori in Switzerland in 1816 of the vampyre as a subject for fiction. Shelley was then in their company. Perhaps it was Southey who set the poets and Polidori on this track. See his note to *Thalaba.* viii. st. 10. (*Poetical Works* ed. 1838. iv. 297 ff.)

He anticipated that the association "would probably excite the odium of those in power." The virtuous champion of the new order would not, however, hesitate in the face of this danger. His ends and means being honest, all should be wrought in the clear eye of day, without hypocrisy or mystery. Would the association be constitutional? There was no written pact to which one could turn and say "This is the British Constitution." To offend against a non-existent entity was manifestly impossible. Government indeed was but "the result of progressive accommodation to existing principles." The principles he was now advocating not yet being generally accepted as rules of government, the Philanthropic Association might encounter danger at the hands of the state. But if this same government "permits a fanatic to assemble any number of persons to teach them the most extravagant and immoral systems of faith," how could it consistently interfere to prevent the consideration of its own principles?

There was a higher arbiter than the British government. "It is no crime to act in contradiction to an English judge or an English legislator, but it is a crime to transgress—Conscience—a government before which all others sink into nothingness." If the French Revolution had failed, it had failed because centuries of oppression, blunting the sensibilities of an enslaved people, had blown out the light of conscience in their hearts.[25] The writers of France had included some who

[25] It would seem to me that Shelley's attitude toward the French peasant who had at last broken out in rebellion has been recaptured for the present age in Edwin Markham's poem *The Man with the Hoe*. In this poem Mr. Markham raises the question, as to the man in Millet's painting,

> Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
> Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
> Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
> Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

"darkened counsel" in their essays. Voltaire and Rousseau he named among these; and regretted that while these had swayed the minds and hearts of men, others wiser than they—Helvetius, Condorcet, and Godwin—had not been heard.

With the purpose, then, of preparing England, not for violent, but for peaceful revolution, associations for the dissemination of true and virtuous principles ought to be formed.[26] Before such tribunals [27] the case of Ireland, and of that of any other oppressed country might be heard, and means be agreed upon for the remedy of grievances. Any measure taken "should be pacific though resolute," [28] and "their movers should be calmly brave and temperately unbending, though the whole heart and soul should go with the attempt." In closing, Shelley invited any person interested in the "proposals" to communicate with him; and to this end subjoined his temporary address in Dublin, No. 7 Lower Sackville Street.

By March 10 Shelley, discouraged by the reception of his *Proposals*, wrote Miss Hitchener: "The Association proceeds slowly, and I fear will not be established." Four days later he confessed: "As to an Association my hopes daily grow fainter . . . as my perceptions of its necessity gain strength." On the 18th Harriet reported to Mrs. Nugent: "All thoughts of an Association are given up as impracticable"; and on the same date Shelley acknowledged as much to Godwin, yielding to the latter's suggestion that he should return to England. "I have withdrawn from circulation the publications wherein

[26] Peacock, in *Nightmare Abbey*, ch. ix, satirized the Shelley of this pamphlet: "—his seeming inattention had only proceeded from his being involved in a profound meditation on a very hopeful scheme for the regeneration of human society."

[27] Have we not, in this, a prophecy of the League of Nations? Of course Milton had conceived such a tribunal, earlier.

[28] Cf. *Mask of Anarchy*. Stanzas lxxix, lxxx, lxxxiv, and lxxxv; *Address to the Irish People*. *Prose Works*. 1880. i. 330.

I erred," he told him, "and am preparing to quit Dublin. It is not because I think *such* associations as I conceived, would be deleterious, that I have witndrawn them. It is possible to festinate, or retard, the progress of human perfectibility; such associations as I would have recommended would be calculated to produce the former effect; the refinement of secessions [29] would prevent a fictitious unanimity, as their publicity would render ineffectual any schemes of violent innovation. . . . My schemes of organizing the ignorant I confess to be ill-timed."

He had improved his opportunities, while in Dublin, and had twice presented himself, with a letter of introduction from Godwin, at the house of John Philpot Curran. But Curran was out, and it was only after repeated calls by Shelley that an acquaintance began by Curran's calling at 7 Lower Sackville Street. Shelley then dined at Curran's. "Curran is certainly a man of great abilities," he reported to Godwin, "but it appears to me that he undervalues his powers when he applies them to what is usually the subject of his conversation. I may not possess sufficient taste to relish humour, or his incessant comicality may weary that which I possess. He does not possess that mould of mind which I have been accustomed to contemplate with the highest feelings of respect and love. In short, though Curran indubitably possesses a strong understanding and a brilliant fancy, I should not have beheld him with the feelings of admiration which his first visit excited, had he not been your intimate friend." [30]

Curran's wit was often weak, even in his carefully prepared speeches delivered in the courts. Sometimes an ardent cham-

[29] For an explanation of this phrase see his letter to Godwin, Mar. 8, 1812. *Letters* i. 272.

[30] Letter. April 25, 1812.

pion of Catholic Emancipation and religious toleration, he had been gradually shifting his ground to the position of an enthusiastic Anglophile; and a little while before Shelley's visit to Dublin, had been honored by the Crown by being made Master of the Rolls. Shelley was already [31] familiar with a published collection of Curran's speeches. The third edition, published by J. Stockdale, of Dublin, had appeared in 1811; and within the covers of this volume one encounters many interesting parallels to Shelley's own political creed at this time. On January 29, 1794, Curran had pleaded for Archibald Hamilton Rowan, charged with a seditious libel. The speech delivered on that occasion included the statement of the purposes which The Society of United Irishmen at Dublin had professed. "Claiming it as our indefeasible right to associate together, in a peaceable and friendly manner, for the communication of thoughts, the formations of opinions, and to promote the general happiness, we think it unnecessary to offer any apology for inviting you to join us in this manly and benevolent pursuit; the necessity of the inhabitants of every community endeavouring to procure a true knowledge of their rights, their duties, and their interests, will not be denied, except by those who are the slaves of prejudice, or interested in the continuation of abuses. As men who wish to aspire to the title of freemen, we totally deny the wisdom and the humanity of the advice, to approach the defects of government with 'pious awe and trembling solicitude.'—We think—that

[31] "I am exceedingly obliged by your letter of introduction to Mr. Curran. His speeches had interested me before I had any idea of coming to Ireland. It seems that he was the only man who would engage in behalf of the prisoners during the times of horror of the Rebellions." Shelley to Godwin, Feb. 24, 1812. "The remnant of United Irishmen whose wrongs make them hate England I have more hopes of." Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener, Feb. 27, 1812. Lawless, with whom the Shelleys associated in Dublin, was refused admittance to the Irish bar because of his affiliation with the United Irishmen.

the cause of truth and justice can never be hurt by temperate and honest discussions; and that cause which will not bear such a scrutiny must be systematically or practically bad." [32] It has been noted earlier that Shelley may have gained his first notion of these Irish and Scottish Associations of the eighteenth century from some references to them in the Abbé Barruel's *Memoirs of Jacobinism*. But the probability that he actually had the prospectus of the United Irishmen before him as he wrote the Irish pamphlets increases as we compare certain passages in each.[33]

In Dublin Shelley also met John Lawless, Irish politician and member of the Catholic Board. Lawless was in charge of a project to prepare and publish a compendium of Irish history, and Shelley instantly plunged into the task of writing certain sections of the work. He also besought his uncle, Thomas Medwin, as to means of raising £250 to carry on the work. But though the history appeared at length, in 1814, no part of it represents Shelley's composition; for the MSS. which Shelley had prepared were, within a few days, taken by the Shelleys to England and subsequently lost.

Miss Catherine Nugent, a kindly Irish woman in moderate circumstances, became interested in the Shelleys while they were in Dublin and many visits were interchanged between them. Harriet's subsequent letters to Miss Nugent form a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of herself and the personality of her charming Irish correspondent, as well as to many facts of Shelley's life from 1812 to 1815. On Miss Nugent's account only, if we are to believe Harriet's statement to Miss Hitchener, the Shelleys interrupted

[32] *Speeches of the Right Honourable John Philpot Curran*. 3rd ed. 1811. pp. 159–60.

[33] For a study of these parallels see Appendix E.

a program of strict vegetarianism when she visited them on March 15, by preparing a "murdered chicken" for their guest.

This vegetarianism was first tried in Dublin [34] and practiced by the Shelleys with fair regularity for several years. Its effects upon Shelley, Peacock believed, were distinctly deleterious. But he held to this regimen, published in *Queen Mab* some verses and a note in praise of the practice, reprinted the note separately with some alterations, a year later, and referred again to the subject in *Laon and Cythna* (v. 2245–2249); thereby furnishing Peacock with material for the amusing debates on its efficacy found in *Headlong Hall* (1816) chapters ii and xiii.[35] An interesting note on Shelley's hobby is furnished by an anonymous acquaintance of his who contributed a sketch of him to the *Literary and Pictorial Repository*, Second Series (c. 1838): "Shelley was of opinion that abstinence from animal food subtilizes and clears the intellectual faculties. For all the sensualities of the table, he had an ineffable contempt, and, like Newton, used sometimes to inquire if he had dined." [36]

"There is not a completer abstraction than labouring for distant ages," Shelley wrote to Godwin from Ireland, March 18, 1812, in the face of the failure of his plans for the regeneration, through the Irish people, of the whole race of man. Then as later

[34] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener. March 14, 1812.

[35] And cf. Haydon's account of Shelley's addiction to vegetarianism: "I seated myself right opposite Shelley, as I was told afterwards, for I did not know what hectic, spare, weakly, yet intellectual-looking being it was, carving a bit of broccoli as if it had been the substantial wing of a chicken." *B. R. Haydon and His Friends*. p. 77.

[36] *Literary and Pictorial Repository*, 2nd Series. p. 288. I cannot discover that this sketch has hitherto been noted by any biographer or critic of the poet.

Man, oh, not men! [37]
Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,[38]

was Shelley's concern. While endeavoring to alleviate the present suffering of those about him he did not lose sight of the necessity for universal relief through universal reform; and if he busied himself with devising associations for the benefit of the Irish, the Welsh, and the English,[39] it is clear from his pamphlets and letters that he seized upon any of these chiefly because they promised well as a starting point for the greater operations of the "self-constituted steward of universal happiness."

On the day that his last letter to Godwin was despatched from Ireland, Shelley sent *via* the Holyhead mail to Miss Hitchener a box in which were enclosed certain printed documents of great interest. The box being opened and examined by the Surveyor of Customs at Holyhead, was discovered to contain matter demanding the attention of the Government; and the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Post Office, and the Irish Secretary were notified. So far as is known, no formal action was taken by these officials, and the box probably found its way, after brief delay, to Miss Hitchener.

The contents of the box which the astute authorities at Holyhead feared to admit into England, were two broadsheets, measuring variously 14⅞ by 8 15/16 inches, and 18⅛ by 14½ inches, and bearing respectively the titles: *Declaration of Rights* [40] and *Devil's Walk*. Of these the first was in prose;

[37] *Prometheus Unbound*. iv. 394.

[38] *Ibid*. iv. 400.

[39] Cf. Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Feb. 27; and March 10, 1812.

[40] Such a broadside "Declaration of Rights," drawn by Stothard, engraved by Sharp, and dedicated to the Society for Constitutional Information, had been published in June 1782. It enumerates several of the points made, afterward, in Shelley's broadside.

the second, in verse. In their form Shelley seems to have carried out his plan originally conceived as the best method for issuing the *Address to the Irish People.* On the 26th of January he had confided to the Hurstperpoint schoolmistress: "All is prepared, I have been busily engaged in an *Address to the Irish* which will be printed as Paine's works were, and pasted on the walls of Dublin." The *Address* was published in a different form, but Shelley followed the idea in the case of these two publications.

INTERCHAPTER III

Analysis of the Declaration of Rights and the Devil's Walk

Since the *Declaration of Rights* is so related to Shelley's reading, to his Irish pamphlets, and to certain later work from his pen, we shall note first what were its contents, its sources, and its analogues. In the *Proposals for an Association* he had written: "Government can have no rights, it is a delegation for the purpose of securing them to others." For article i of the *Declaration* he altered and amplified this statement thus: "Government has no rights; it is a delegation from several individuals for the purpose of securing their own. It is therefore just, only so far as it exists by their consent, useful only so far as it operates to their well-being." The second article announced that "If these individuals think that the form of government which they, or their forefathers constituted is ill-adapted to produce their happiness, they have a right to change it." We shall see how later Shelley found one of the chief excellences of the American constitution to be that "It constitutionally acknowledges the progress of human improvement, and is framed under the limitation of the probability of more simple views of political science being rendered applicable to human life. There is a law by which the constitution is reserved for revision every ten years."[41] Since Shelley told Miss Hitchener that one of Eliza Westbrook's activities in Dublin was to be "to employ herself in collecting the useful passages"[42] from the works of Tom

[41] *Philosophical View of Reform.* 1820. pp. 13–14.
[42] Letter, Feb. 14, 1812.

Paine, it is likely that he had read Paine's praise of this feature of the newer constitutions.[43]

"Government," Shelley declared in the third article, "is devised for the security of Rights. The rights of man are liberty, and an equal participation of the commonage of nature." This was restated in *A Philosophical View of Reform* (written 1819) to read: "The result of the labours of the political philosophers has been the establishment of the principles of Unity as the substance, and liberty and equality as the forms according to which the concerns of human life ought to be administered."[44] In 1810 he had written to Hogg: "*Man* is equal, and I am convinced that equality will be the attendant on a more advanced and ameliorated state of society."[45] The theory of "equal participation of the commonage of nature" was later to be reintroduced in the *Essay on Christianity* (written 1815, published 1859) in which Shelley said: "With all those who are truly wise, there will be an entire community not only of thoughts and feelings, but also of external possessions.—In the proportion to the love existing among men, so will be the community of property and power. Among true and real friends, all is common."[46]

In the same work he quoted from Diogenes: "Decrease your physical wants, learn to live, so far as nourishment and shelter are concerned, like the beast of the forest and the birds of the air; ye will need not to complain, that other individuals of your species are surrounded by the diseases of luxury and

[43] Paine, *Rights of Man.* ed. 1817. p. 57: "One of the greatest improvements that has been made for the perpetual security and progress of Constitutional Liberty, is the provision which the new Constitutions make for occasionally revising, altering, and amending them."

[44] *Philosophical View of Reform.* pp. 11–12.

[45] Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* i. 144.

[46] *Shelley Memorials.* (1859) p. 279.

vices of subserviency and oppression." The thought had been put, two centuries earlier, into the mouth of the Lady in *Comus*, who upbraids the sorcerer:

> Impostor do not charge most innocent nature,
> As if she would her children should be riotous
> With her abundance, the good cateress
> Means her provision onely to the good
> That live according to her sober laws,
> And holy dictate of spare Temperance;
> If every just man that now pines with want
> Had but a moderate and beseeming share
> Of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury
> Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
> Natures full blessings would be well dispenc't
> In unsuperfluous even proportion,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And then the giver would be better thank't.[47]

Basing his contention on the third article of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* passed by the National Assembly of France during the Revolution,[48] Shelley stated his fourth point: "As the benefit of the governed is, or ought to be the origin of government, no men can have any authority that does not expressly emanate from their will." This was in part a reassertion of the tenet advanced in the *Address to the Irish People:* "The benefit of the governed is the origin and meaning of government."

"To begin to reform the government is immediately necessary," he had counselled in the *Address*, for "political institu-

[47] Milton, *Comus*. 762–775.

[48] Reprinted in Paine's *Rights of Man*. ed. 1817. p. 66: "The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty, nor can any individual, nor any body of men, be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it."

tion has ever been the greatest influence on the human character, and is that alone which differences the Turk from the Irishman." [49] The right thus to amend government was stated in the fifth article of the *Declaration*, as follows: "Though all governments are not so bad as that of Turkey, yet none are so good as they might be; the majority of every country have a right to perfect their government, the minority should not disturb them; they ought to secede, and form their own system in their own way." [50] That this provision for secessions of the minority had been included in his scheme of a philanthropic association for Ireland, we know from two letters of Shelley to Godwin, written from Dublin. "No *unnatural unanimity* can take place," he had urged, "if secessions of the minority on any question are invariably made. It might segregate into twenty different societies, each coinciding generically, though differing specifically." [51] And again: "the refinement of secessions would prevent a fictitious unanimity, as their publicity would render ineffectual any schemes of violent innovation." [52] The fact that Shelley did not include within the text of the *Address* or the *Proposals* this plan for secessions suggests that the *Declaration of Rights* may have actually been distributed, with the other pamphlets in Ireland, as a supplementary document.

The sixth article of Shelley's Declaration appears to be a fusion of the ideas promulgated in articles vi. and x. of the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man*.[53] The thesis of this article is one in whose defence Shelley often spoke and

[49] *Prose Works*. 1880. i. 346.
[50] *Ibid.* i. 394.
[51] Letter of Feb. 24, 1812. *Letters*. i. 263.
[52] Letter of March 18, 1812. *Letters*. i. 286.
[53] Cf. Paine, *Rights of Man*. (ed. Sherwin, London, 1817) Part I. p. 66.

always in no uncertain terms. The French had declared: "No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the laws." The interference of the courts with Peter Finnerty, Leigh Hunt, Daniel Isaac Eaton, William Hone, and Richard Carlile, at various periods of Shelley's life evoked from him one unvarying protest against the "bare-faced tyranny" [54] of government in bringing punishment upon these men for their opinions.

Godwin, discussing the sphere of individual action and the necessity for government to see that no man invaded that of his neighbor, had written: "Its powers, in this respect, are a continuation of the powers of individuals to control the excesses of each other. Hence is derived to the individuals of the community, a second and indirect province, of providing . . . that the control is not exercised in a despotical manner, or carried to an undue excess." [55] Shelley, in the next article of his Declaration, merely restated the Godwinian position.

The certain sign of fraud in such oppressions as those described in article vi. was that power was "used to enforce instead of reason to persuade" [56] the individual of the error of his position. The thought was often repeated in the early pamphlets, but nowhere more graphically than in the *Proposals for an Association:*

When Jupiter and a countryman were one day walking out, conversing familiarly on the affairs of earth, the countryman listened to

[54] *Declaration of Rights.* vi.
[55] *Political Justice.* i. 218.
[56] *Declaration of Rights.* viii.

Jupiter's assertions on the subject for some time in acquiescence. At length, happening to hint a doubt, Jupiter threatened him with his thunder. "Ah, ah," says the countryman, "now, Jupiter, I know that you are wrong; you are always when you appeal to yoūr thunder." [57]

While the Shelleys were yet in Ireland, the young poet-reformer had, as we have seen, reported to Miss Hitchener that Eliza was about to collect "the useful passages" from the works of Thomas Paine, which Shelley would then publish. It seems likely, from its similarity to article ix of Shelley's *Declaration,* that one of these "useful passages" was that in the Preface to the Second Part of the *Rights of Man:*

If a law be bad, it is one thing to oppose the practice of it, but it is quite a different thing to expose its errors, to reason on its defects, and to shew cause why it should be repealed or why another ought to be substituted in its place. I have always held it an opinion (making it also my practice) that it is better to obey a bad law, making use at the same time, of every argument to shew its errors and procure its repeal, than forcibly to violate it; because the precedent of breaking a bad law might weaken the force, and lead to a discretionary violation, of those which are good.[58]

Godwin on the same theme had adjured his disciples to

comply, where the necessity of the case demands it; but criticise while you comply.[59]

Reviewing the circumstances surrounding the framing of the French *Declaration* Paine had recalled how

[57] *Address to the Irish People,* in *Prose Works* i. And cf. Volney, *Ruins of Empires* (ed. 1811. p. 67): "Violence is the argument of falsehood; and to impose a creed authoritively, is the index and proceeding of a tyrant."

[58] *Rights of Man. Part the Second.* (1817) p. viii.

[59] *Political Justice.* i. 230.

while the Declaration of Rights was before the National Assembly, some of its members remarked, that if a Declaration of Rights was published, it should be accompanied by a Declaration of Duties.[60]

But Paine before endorsing had altered this statement to read:

A Declaration of Rights is, by Reciprocity, a Declaration of Duties also. Whatever is my right as a man, is also the right of another; and it becomes my duty to guarantee, as well as to possess.[61]

Shelley, in the tenth article of his *Declaration*, follows Paine and reiterates an idea already given to the Irish in his *Proposals for an Association*,[62] when he says:

A man must have a right to act in a certain manner before it can be his duty. He may, before he ought.[63]

As the inaugurators of the French republic had avowed their belief that

The unrestrained communication of his thoughts and opinions being one of the most precious Rights of Man, every citizen may speak, write, and publish freely,[64]

so Shelley, in articles xi, xii, xiii, and xiv, affirms his faith in unrestricted liberty of thought and expression.

True again to Godwin [65] and Paine,[66] and reaffirming a position already taken in the *Address* [67] and the *Proposals*,[68] Shelley maintained:

[60] *Rights of Man.* p. 68.
[61] *Ibid.* 63. And cf. *Dissertation on First Principles of Government.* 13.
[62] *Prose Works.* 1880. i. 380.
[63] *Ibid.* i. 395.
[64] *Rights of Man.* 66–7.
[65] See *Political Justice.* i. 166, 221.
[66] See *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* (1817) 66.
[67] *Prose Works.* 1880. i. 323.
[68] *Ibid.* i. 379.

. . . Government cannot make a law; it can only pronounce that which was the law before its organization.[69]

Nor could one generation bind its successors to the acceptance or performance of anything.[70] He had warned the Irish: "Never do evil that good may come"; and he now asserted that no man has a right to employ evil to attain good.[71] The maxim is logically connected with his next tenet, that "Politics are only sound when conducted on principles of morality."[72]

"If they continue to make us fight and kill one another in uniform," the United Irishmen had vowed, "we will continue to write and speak, until nations shall be cured of this folly."[73] Similarly, Shelley, who in the *Address to the Irish People* had attacked war, declares anew: "Man has no right to kill his brother, it is no excuse that he does so in uniform. He only adds the infamy of servitude to the crime of murder."[74] Eight years later his view of the slave-soldier had not altered.[75]

The equality of the rights of man everywhere, first announced as an abstract rule in article xx, is particularized in article xxiv, after Voltaire,[76] and reiterates ideas set forth in the *Address to the Irish People*,[77] thus: "A Christian, a Deist, a Turk, and a Jew, have equal rights: they are men and

[69] *Declaration of Rights.* xv.
[70] *Ibid.* xvi; and cf. Paine, *Dissertation on First Principles of Government.* 1817. pp. 8–9.
[71] *Declaration of Rights.* xvii.
[72] *Ibid.* xviii.
[73] *Curran's Speeches.* 161.
[74] *Declaration of Rights* xix.
[75] See *Philosophical View of Reform.* 68.
[76] *Philosophical Dictionary.* ed. 1824. vi. 279.
[77] *Prose Works.* 1880. i. 318.

brethren." The same thought recurs in the *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*,[78] published later in the same year. As in article vi. he had protested against the imposition of disabilities upon a man because of his opinions, he once more [79] challenges government on this score and declares that "religious differences, the bloodiest and most rancorous of all, spring from partiality." Unquestionably, Shelley here intended an attack on state religions, and especially on the Christianity of the Established Church. In the *Letter to Lord Ellenborough* he makes this clear. He says:

> Christianity is now the established religion; he who attempts to disprove it, must behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion.[80]

Now and always Shelley maintained that

> If you are convinced of the truth of your cause, trust wholly to its truth,[81]

and that religion and philosophy never need external supports but should be tested by their power to convince and move men. The same quarrel with governmental intervention probably precipitated article xxii, which grounded in part on article i, proceeds to deny the *right* of government to restrain the expression of any man's opinion; since no power to do this had ever been conferred by the electorate upon it.

The absurdity of such prosecutions is his next concern; and in taking the position that "Belief is involuntary; nothing involuntary is meritorious or reprehensible," Shelley announced

[78] *Ibid.* i. 423–4. And cf. Volney, *Law of Nature*, in Appendix to *Ruins of Empires.* (1811) p. 7.

[79] In article xxi. of *Declaration of Rights.*

[80] *Prose Works.* i. 418.

[81] *Address to the Irish People*, in *Prose Works.* i. 327–8.

a creed frequently reëchoed in his works; a thesis of the greatest importance in understanding his philosophical position. In the light of this doctrine, his ejection from Oxford, his father's denial of support immediately after, the opprobrium visited upon him for living with Mary Godwin out of wedlock, his publishers' insistence upon the alterations in *Laon and Cythna* which transformed that poem into *The Revolt of Islam*, the Lord Chancellor's verdict in the Chancery Suit of 1817 whereby Shelley was denied the custody of his children —all appear in the light of unjust persecution and caused Shelley to seem in his own eyes a misused man, even a martyr. In the *Address to the Irish People*,[82] in *A Refutation of Deism*,[83] in *The Necessity of Atheism*,[84] and in the *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*,[85] he repeatedly insists upon the truth of this dogma.[86] Perhaps Shelley had read, in Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, the words of the Genius who in that tale, as the Fairy in *Queen Mab*, was showing the narrator the ruins of past greatness, and deducing morals therefrom:

> . . . what is doubt . . . that it should be regarded as a crime? Has man the power of thinking contrary to the impressions that are made upon him? [87]

Or he may have encountered in the same author's *Law of Nature*, this:

> Q[uestion]: Are there not other laws just?
> A[nswer]: No, for they frequently attach to merit, or to crim-

[82] Cf. *Prose Works*. i. 324-5.
[83] *Ibid.* ii. 36, 42, 52–3.
[84] Cf. *Ibid.* i. 306, 309.
[85] *Ibid.* i. 411, 414, 416–17.
[86] And cf. Shelley's letters to Elizabeth Hitchener, June 11, 1811; Jan. 2, 1812, and Feb. 3, 1812.
[87] Ed. 1811. p. 67.

inality, disproportionate punishment or reward, and impute merit and criminality to actions which are null or indifferent.[88]

In the twenty-second chapter of *The Ruins of Empires* the legislators are described as addressing the nations on the causes of the diversity of their beliefs, and asking:

. . . has not your belief been rather the chance result of birth, and of the empire of education and habit? Are you not born Christians on the banks of the Tiber, Mahometans on those of the Euphrates, Idolaters on the shores of India, in the same manner as you are born fair in cold and temperate regions, and of a sable complexion under the African sun? [89]

The idea is used by Shelley in article xxv of his *Declaration,* to support his plea for love even of the members of other sects than one's own; and this plea is further fortified by article xxvi in which Paine's

the key of heaven is not in the keeping of any sect, nor ought the road to be obstructed by any [90]

is stated with more rancor.[91]

Godwin had written:

The thing really to be desired, is the removing as much as possible arbitrary distinctions, and leaving to talents and virtue the field of exertion unimpaired,[92]

and Shelley, reasserting this, listed in the twenty-seventh article of the *Declaration,* titles, power, glory, and excessive

[88] Appendix (p. 7) to 5th ed. (1811) of *Ruins of Empires.*

[89] Volney, *Ruins of Empires.* p. 181.

[90] *Letters to the Citizens of the United States.* (1817) p. 30.

[91] Shelley had previously voiced the same sentiment in the *Proposals for an Association, Prose Works* i. 373, 380; and *Address to the Irish People, Prose Works* i. 318.

[92] *Political Justice.* (ed. 1798) i. 147.

wealth, as four of these "arbitrary distinctions" which must be eliminated before the new era could dawn. The last of them led him to the arraignment of monopolists and of the so-called "charities" of those whose excessive wealth was in itself "a libel on its possessor."

A year later Shelley was to quote, in the *Notes* to *Queen Mab*, a passage from Godwin's *Enquirer* in which that mentor of the poet had maintained that

> Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.[93]

And now Shelley insists that it is the *duty* of every man "to attain a certain degree of knowledge." [94] This he had previously urged upon the Irish,[95] believing with Volney that in an ordered society even

> the poor [will feel] that the highest degree of human felicity consists in peace of mind and *the due employment of time*.[96]

Twice in his *Address to the Irish People* Shelley had commended to the sons of Ireland "habits of Sobriety, Regularity, and Thought" [97] and he now advocates their adoption by all "who would be free." [98] How faithfully Shelley himself held to a life of denial all know who have read the testimony of Hogg, Peacock, Trelawny, Hunt, and others as to his ab-

[93] *Enquirer.* (ed. 1797). essay ii.
[94] *Declaration of Rights.* art. xxix.
[95] *Address to the Irish People. Prose Works.* i. 335, 336, 346.
[96] *Ruins of Empires,* 5th ed. 1811. p. 64. The italics are my own.
[97] *Prose Works.* i. 331, 337.
[98] *Declaration of Rights.* xxix.

stemiousness and preoccupation with the things of the mind. The special reasons why men, not on any emotional basis whatever but exercising sheer common sense, should live such a life are well stated by Shelley, in this thirtieth article of the *Declaration:*

> because, without sobriety a high sense of philanthropy cannot actuate the heart, nor cool and determined courage execute its dictates.

Finally, as he had learned at the feet of Godwin that government was an evil which, though originated to prevent domestic or foreign usurpation had brought in its train more evils than it had checked,[99] he introduced as his last article such comfort as is contained in the counsel:

> If man were today sinless, tomorrow he would have a right to demand that government and all its evils should cease.

And in an exordium reminding men of their native dignity, from which government and other iniquitous influences had temporarily withdrawn them, he ended on the quotation from Lucifer's address to the fallen angels in Milton's great epic:

> Awake, arise, or be forever fall'n.[100]

Turning now to the other publication, *The Devil's Walk,* sent with the *Declaration* to Miss Hitchener on March 18, 1812, we may note that it was in the process of construction some two months previously, when Shelley included an early draft of it in a letter to the schoolmistress; [101] and that it is indebted in no slight degree to *The Devil's Thoughts,* written in conjunction by Coleridge and Southey,

[99] Cf. *Political Justice.* ii. 212.

[100] *Paradise Lost.* i. 330. But the original text of the *Declaration* reads "fallen," not "fall'n."

In the town of Nether Stowey,
In the shire of Somerset

There while the one was shaving
Would he the song begin;
And the other when he heard it at breakfast,
In ready accord join in.[102]

Southey, in publishing a revised version of this poem, furnishes in a footnote what may have been the original inspiration of the joint effort of the two young poets: "'After this I was in a vision, having the angel of God near me, and saw Satan walking leisurely into London.'—*Brother's Prophesies*, part i. p. 41." [103] The following series of parallel passages will give an idea of the extent of Shelley's indebtedness to the earlier poem:

Shelley, *The Devil's Walk* [104]	Coleridge, *The Devil's Thoughts* [105]
Once, early in the morning,	From his brimstone bed at break
Beelzebub arose,	of day
With care his sweet person adorn-	A walking the Devil is gone,
ing,	(ll. 1–2).
He put on his Sunday clothes.	And how then was the Devil
(ll. 1–4).	drest?
In looking over his farm, I wist	Oh! he was in his Sunday
(l. 21)	best:

[101] Letter, Jan., 1812. *Letters.* i. 230–2.

[102] Southey, *The Devil's Walk* (an expanded version of the original poem). *Poetical Works of Robert Southey.* 1838. iii. 96.

[103] *Poetical Works of Robert Southey.* 1838. iii. 90. n.

[104] The text is from the original broadside (the only copy extant) in the Public Record Office, London.

[105] The text is that of Derwent and Sara Coleridge's edition (1852) of Coleridge's poems. In this it is explicitly stated that Southey was responsible only for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 9th, and 16th stanzas of the original poem.

Satan saw a lawyer, a viper slay,
That crawled up the leg of his table,
It reminded him most marvellously,
Of the story of Cain and Abel.
(ll. 84–87)

. . . . .

. . . they thrive well who from the poor,
Have snatched the bread of penury,
And heap the houseless wanderer's store,
On the rank pile of luxury.
(ll. 96–99).

(ll. 9–10)

To visit his snug little farm, the Earth. (l. 3.)

He saw a Lawyer killing a viper
On a dunghill hard by his own stable,
And the Devil smiled, for it put him in mind
Of Cain and his brother Abel.
(ll. 13–16)

. . . . .

He took from the poor,
And he gave to the rich,
(ll. 61–2).

The Devil's Walk represents Satan as visiting the Court of St. James, and St. Paul's, and prying into the private lives of his servants in the manner of the Devil in Le Sage's *Le Diable Boiteux*.[106] It attacks priests and kings, the destruction wrought by the troops of Spain [107] in that country, and by the British administration in Ireland; the Prince Regent,[108] lawyers, wealthy land-owners,[109] bishops, statesmen; and is peo-

[106] Translated into English in 1790. It produced a host of imitators.

[107] Cf. *Address to the Irish People*. (*Prose Works*, i. 348–9): "The barren victories of Spain gained in behalf of a bigoted and tyrannical government, are nothing to them [the poor]."

[108] Whom the poet had been watching as His Highness reviewed his Hussars on Jan. 20, 1812—the day on which Shelley sent Miss Hitchener the first draft of this poem. See *Letters* (1912) i. 232.

[109] Shelley says elsewhere: "The true pension list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors."

pled with abstractions forecasting those which were later to figure in *The Mask of Anarchy:* Loyalty, Murder, Want, and Woe. At the end, Shelley in the spirit of Paine's "The present Age will hereafter merit to be called the Age of Reason" [110] prophesies an end of earthly tyrannies:

> For the sons of Reason see,
> That, ere fate consume the Pole,
> The false Tyrant's cheek shall be
> Bloodless as his coward soul.

[110] *Rights of Man.* (ed. 1817) II. v. p. 114. And cf. *Address to the Irish People* (*Prose Works* i. 323): "—this age, which is called the age of reason."

CHAPTER VII

(CONTINUED)

THE Shelleys and Eliza Westbrook, and probably also Shelley's man servant, Daniel Hill, left Dublin for Holyhead on Saturday, April 4. Against unfavorable winds they made their way to the English coast and reached port about two o'clock on the morning of April 6. Delaying a day at Holyhead, on Tuesday, the 7th, they proceeded southward, their objective, as Shelley explained to Godwin on the 25th of April, being "Merionethshire, the scene of Fleetwood's early life";[111] but failing to find there "even temporary accommodation" they, after more than a fortnight's search through North and a part of South Wales, found themselves at last in the vale of Nantgwillt, near Rhayader, in Radnorshire. The scene was not that of Fleetwood's early life; but it was already familiar to Shelley, who less than a year before had visited the district as a guest of his uncle, Thomas Grove. Now his uncle did not fail him, but was ready to help Shelley to arrange for the lease of a property of two hundred acres "in a cheap, retired, romantic spot" suited to Shelley's temperament.

Memories of his former visit to Wales came crowding upon him among mountains and rocks which seemed to Shelley to form "a natural barrier which the tumult of the world may never overleap." Now "the ghosts of these old friends" he

[111] *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* (1912) i. 295. Cf. Godwin, *Fleetwood,* ed. 1832. pp. 1–4, 9–10, for description of the scenes amid which Fleetwood spent his youth. *Fleetwood* was first published in 1805.

From a contemporary print

Where Shelley set sail for Ireland in 1812.

had known and forgotten a while in absence, had for him "a dim and strange appearance when resuscitated in a situation" [112] altered by all the events that had transpired in the interim. The mood produced *The Retrospect: Cwm Elan, 1812*, in which the contrast between his loneliness and despair in the preceding summer, and his present happiness with Harriet is set forth in the smoothest verses he had yet written. He relates how, like another Fleetwood, in the summer of 1811 he had climbed "some heathy mountain's height," to "listen to the mystic sounds" [113] rising to that eminence; had "seen the sun rise and set," [114] had given way to grief, and reclining under "the wild wood's gloomiest shade" [115] had endeavored to "quench the ceaseless flame" [116] which preyed on him; had even considered suicide [117] as he feared his suffering might induce insanity.[118] Then Harriet Grove had broken her vows to him,[119] and shown apathy [120] where love had formerly been; giving him a feeling of disappointment most keen because he realized that thus was removed another possible sympathizer with his metaphysical views.[121] One after another, those whom he had thought his friends had failed [122] him; but he who felt himself bourgeoning with the spirit of

The savior of a sinking land [123]

[112] Letter to Godwin, April 25, 1812. *Letters.* i. 296.
[113] *The Retrospect: Cwm Elan,* l. 17.
[114] Preface to *Revolt of Islam.*
[115] *The Retrospect: Cwm Elan,* l. 26.
[116] *Ibid.* l. 27.
[117] *Ibid.* l. 31.
[118] *Ibid.* l. 34.
[119] *Ibid.* l. 51.
[120] *Ibid.* l. 55.
[121] *Ibid.* 61–3.
[122] *Ibid.* 64–71.
[123] *Ibid.* 73.

would not faint or fail though death should be his only reward.[124]

Remembering some of his twilight walks and talks with Harriet Grove in the "ornamented territory" [125] of her father's estate—walks probably suggestive of that taken by Fitzeustace and Eloise in *St. Irvyne* [126] and certainly the same described in *Alastor*,[127] Shelley declared confidently that those

> Who bask in Custom's fickle ray,
> Fit sunshine of such wintry day! [128]
> . . . could not in a twilight walk [129]
> Weave an impassioned web of talk,
> Till mysteries the spirits press
> In wild yet tender awfulness.

Harriet Shelley had reported to Elizabeth Hitchener that the poor Irish "when there is a drawing-room held, . . . go . . . some distance to see the people who keep them starving . . . they will crowd around the state carriages in great glee to see those within who have stripped them of their rights." [130] So now Shelley as a contrast to those who prefer "an impassioned web of talk," describes those who rather elect to

> . . . shine in courtly glare,
> Attract the rabble's cheapest stare,
> Be princes' friends; [131]

but says that those who so choose cannot be *his* friends, too.

[124] *Ibid.* 76.
[125] Cf. ch. v. note 113.
[126] *Prose Works.* i. 285.
[127] 29–37.
[128] *Cf. Laon and Cythna.* IX. xxv. i: "This is the winter of the world."
[129] Cf. with the four lines next succeeding, *Alastor*, 29–37.
[130] *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 285.
[131] 90–91, and 97.

Adjuring the peaks of the Cwm-tythen Hills and woods and meadows of the surrounding country to recall how in a former time they who now appeared wholly bright and beautiful, had soothed his "spirit's sadness," [132] he comes at last upon the happiness he had sought [133] and all nature seems glorious as a consequence.[134]

Then follows an address to Harriet Shelley which, as evidence of the poet's affection for his first wife is of real importance:

> O thou! whose virtues latest known,
> First in this heart yet claim'st a throne;
> Whose downy scepter still shall share
> The gentle sway with virtue there;
> Thou fair in form, and pure in mind,
> Whose ardent friendship rivets fast
> The flowery band our fates that bind,
> Which incorruptible shall last
> When duty's hard and cold control
> Has thawed around the burning soul,—
> The gloomiest retrospects that bind
> With crowns of thorn the bleeding mind,
> The prospects of most doubtful hue
> That rise on Fancy's shuddering view,—
> Are gilt by the reviving ray
> Which thou hast flung upon my day.[135]

Some time before April 24, on which date Shelley appealed to his father for an advance of £500 to cover the purchase of the furniture and stock of the Hooper property at Nantgwillt,

[132] 120.

[133] 130–138. Cf. with l. 135 of this poem, the 486th line of *Adonais*.

[134] 122–9. Cf. this passage with *Sensitive Plant*. 53–54.

[135] 151–4. With these lines cf. *Queen Mab*. vi. 15–22; and *Dedication* to that poem, line 5.

Harriet had been stricken with a tedious intermittent fever. Further anxieties arose from the circulation at Hurstperpoint of unwarranted scandal concerning Shelley and Miss Hitchener. The father of the schoolmistress now intervened to forbid his daughter's acceptance of Shelley's invitation to join them in Wales and there abide "forever." Shelley was indignant at the Hurstperpoint gossips for the circulation of rumors, and at Mr. Hitchener for his endeavor to rule his daughter's life. On the 30th he wrote Mr. Hitchener that if he desired to retain his [Shelley's] good opinion he must revoke his mandate against his daughter's plan.[136]

By May 1st it became necessary to summon a physician from a point forty miles away to attend Harriet in her illness. Shelley was confident of her recovery, he told Miss Hitchener, and he promised himself much pleasure in their entertainment of "Portia" (i. e. Elizabeth Hitchener) in the near future. "You are to my fancy," he wrote, "as a thunder-riven pinnacle of rock,[137] firm amid the rushing tempest and the boiling surge. Aye! stand forever firm, and, when our ship anchors close to thee, the crew will cover thee with flowers." [138] On the 7th Shelley could report Harriet's marked recovery,[139] and their plan to take possession of the Hooper house and farm on the Thursday following (May 14).[140] But the deal was not closed on that day, nor as late as a fortnight after, for on June 2 he confessed disappointedly to Miss Hitchener: "We are not yet certain of possessing Nantgwillt. —On *Friday* [i. e. June 5] it will be fixed. I shall immedi-

[136] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 29, 300. f. 152 a, 152 b. 153.

[137] A favorite figure with Shelley; cf. *To Wordsworth*, l. 9; and *Rosalind and Helen*, 632.

[138] *Letters*. i. 303.

[139] To Miss Hitchener. *Letters*. i. 304.

[140] Letter to Catherine Nugent. *Letters*. i. 309.

ately furnish our largest room as a *Library*—for which I shall have credit on my future percuniary [*sic*] prospects. I think this luxury is one that we are entitled to, if we are entitled to any advantage from our fortune, even if we put out of our consideration, that knowledge that a library will give us of wielding [*sic*] the power [140a] we shall posess [*sic*] for the benefit of the Human race." The cost of Miss Hitchener's trip would be defrayed by Shelley, "as our income is by right, national right, the property of all the members of our society, of which you are henceforth considered as one."

Shelley's letter to Godwin, June 3rd, should be read entire for the supplementary account there given of his earlier years. He had written *in extenso* to Godwin on this topic on Jan. 10 and 16, 1812. He mentions reading the works of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus, Locke, Hume, Reid, and other metaphysical works; Godwin and D'Holbach.[141]

In a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener three days later, he communicated the discouraging intelligence that, having failed to satisfy Mr. Hooper, of Nantgwillt, as to their security for payment of the purchase price of his furniture and stock, they had been obliged to give up the property, and to resort to the Groves', at Cwm Elan, for a season. Shelley had written Miss Hitchener of a plan whereby he and Harriet should journey to London or Hurst to meet her and return thence with her to Nantgwillt. But the plan for the reasons above stated had to be abandoned; and Miss Hitchener proposed that all should domicile together in her house at Hurstperpoint. Shelley's objection to this was the propinquity to trouble-making relatives, he having suspected his aunt, Mrs.

[140a] Previously printed: "build the house."

[141] Shelley then believed the *Système de la Nature* to be the work of M. Mirabaud.

Pilfold, of responsibility for disseminating the scandal involving himself and Miss Hitchener. Just at this point in the correspondence, I think it is of value to introduce the letter (last of the series from Miss Hitchener to Shelley) written in reply to Shelley's letter of April 29th, in which he had announced Harriet's illness. If it does not indicate craft, shrewd psychology, and maundering hypocrisy as at least three characteristics of Shelley's "Portia" the present writer is no judge of evidence. It is my belief that this letter will go a long way toward explaining just *why* after so short a residence with the Shelleys, as we shall hereafter see, this archangel of the new era had become tarnished and bedraggled and a veritable "Brown Demon." [142] Why Elizabeth should expatiate in this fashion upon her devotion and concern for the life of a woman she had never met—the particular woman who in August of the preceding year had intervened to marry the youth with whom the school-mistress had been corresponding with steadily increasing warmth of affectionate protestations during the months just preceding that marriage—why she should for her have loosed the full flood of amorous superlatives I for one cannot understand, unless now she believed the bird limed and the trap ready to be sprung.

Hurst.

I will not now my dearest friend take your time by telling you how much my dear Harriet's illness distresses me; but only request you to send me by every post, you have, an account of her, two lines will at such a moment content me, ah if only the heartenlivening words "my dear Harriet is better," there needed not this illness to convince me how necessary her existence is to my happiness, live oh live dearest Sister of my mind & soul, live for thy Husband, thy Friend, not one dearest Harriet can spare thee, ah the anticipated bliss we all promise

[142] Shelley, Letter to Hogg, Dec. 3, 1812. *Letters* i. 367.

ourselves, ah let it not be thus frustrated, think of thy Percy, thy Eliza, thy Portia, & if the wish to live can preserve life, oh disappoint them not, without thee what a blank would this world be to us, a wilderness indeed, where our *all* of happiness would be the sympathy of mourning the loss of her who was to each their richest treasure, to each individual thou art indeed a blessing, & formest unitedly a bliss an envious world cannot bear to see, & which they exert & will continue to exert all their maliciousness to destroy, well may they say they cannot understand it, disinterested friendship is indeed unintelligible to them, & a friendship free from all worldly *influence & prejudice*, may well astonish them, romantic indeed it must appear among a set of beings who acknowledge no principle of action divested of self-interest, they say it is unaccountable & better so than when they attempt to account for it, for judging by their own feelings, they say everything but the truth, & truth being beyond their comprehension, how can we give those ideas, who want perception, I fear all our attempts will not be able to convince them; but as you my friends are not to be influenced by all they can say, rely on it we shall all some day live together, your confidence in me is unshaken, despight [*sic*] malice & envy, mine in you no one can remove of this you will be convinc'd when we meet & I relate to you the abominable falsehoods asserted, & the insinations [*sic*] against you, with which they would separate us, I *judge for my self*, because I am persuaded my judgment was given me for that purpose; I am told, I cannot know you, but those who say it, know not the springs which open instantly the human heart & mind to the inspection of others, *I do know you*, & far better than those who say I know you not, & equally do I know my beloved Harriet, your account of her conduct spoke a volume but volumes of her have I read since, in [ ] [143] of her actions, & I am as well convinc'd as if I had liv'd with her for years, that a more exalted soul never was confin'd in a human frame, ah me my Harriet bear for our sakes still longer that confinement, I am older than thee many years, cheat me not then of my claim to explore for thee those un-

[143] Undecipherable word.

known scenes which human footsteps ne'er have trod, surely the right is mine to welcome rather than be welcomed by thee there let me but hear you are better be thou but well, all our other wishes fade before this, all difficulties as to them I do not despair of overcoming; I hope to write again to night, yet not to night for till my Harriet's health is restor'd all all other subjects must be foreign to my pen, meet we will if possible at mids., & rest assur'd I am as firmly one of thy circle as if in person with ye, your writing to my Father is an act worthy of you my friend, did he but know you he would confide in you; but when I tell you how shamefully you have been represented to him, you will pardon his opposition, & respect him for it.

[then f. 113 v is crossed, thus:]

no my Harriet nothing shall induce me to desert thee, desert not then I entreat thee, her, who loves thee with the sincerest love. Percy I intreat thee write by every post a line will do for my Harriet needeth now all thy time oh tell me she is better.

[and f. 112 is crossed, thūs:]

My dearest friends believe me immoveably & unalterably thine whilst time shall last thro' all changes of being still forever thine.

PORTIA.[144]

Plans for proceeding to Ilfracombe in North Devon were announced to Miss Hitchener in a letter of June 11th, in which Shelley also described to her the route she should follow in proceeding from Hurst *via* London to Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. He suggested to her that she would be welcomed at the Westbrook home in London *en route* to Devon.[145] Wending their way southeastward through Somersetshire they came upon the little town of Lynmouth,[146] near Barnstaple—

[144] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 37496. ff. 112, 113.

[145] Letter, June 11, 1812. *Letters.* i. 318.

[146] Spelled "Lymouth" by Shelley, Harriet, and the Town Clerk of Barnstaple in letters hereafter quoted; but "Lynmouth" by Godwin—the accepted spelling.

LYNMOUTH AND LYNTON
Where Shelley and Harriet lived in 1812.

a village of some thirty cottages, quite cut off from other towns by the precipitousness of the road which alone gave access to it. The cottage they had the good fortune to secure was in a romantic situation. At its side and rear loomed steep hills; before it stretched the sea. Vegetation was luxurious; and the cottage was covered with climbing roses and myrtle. "It is such a little place," wrote Harriet to Catherine Nugent, "that it seems more like a fairy scene than anything in reality." [147]

Daniel Hill, their Irish servant, was with them; but Harriet intimated that they desired to and probably soon would rid themselves of him. "Percy has some thoughts of sending him to Dublin to see after his poems that are at the printers, but whether he will or not it is impossible to say." The mention of poems at the printer's naturally raises the question: What poems? What printer's? No doubt these were the poems now included in the "Esdaile MS. Notebook" from which in 1886 Professor Dowden published some extracts; and which represent in part the creative activity of Shelley during the years 1811–1813; but these poems have never been published in full. No collection of Shelley's poems was printed in Dublin in 1812; and the printer referred to cannot be identified. Perhaps it was I. Eton, of Winetavern Street, who had published the *Proposals for an Association.*

At Lynmouth in August Shelley busied himself in the composition of "a fragment of some three hundred lines—still in manuscript—entitled *The Voyage.* It tells, in the irregular, unrhymed verse, which Shelley adopted from *Thalaba* and employed in *Queen Mab*, of a ship returning across the summer sea from her voyage; and of her company of voyagers, with their various passions and imaginings—two ardent youths

[147] Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent, June 30, 1812. *Letters.* i. 339.

who have braved all dangers side by side; the landsman mean and crafty, who bears across the stainless ocean all the base thoughts and selfish greeds of the city; the sailor, returning to his cottage-home, and wife and babes, but seized at the moment of his dearest hope by minions of the press-gang and hurried away reluctant." [148] Here too he probably composed *A Retrospect of Times of Old*—a rhymed piece, also unpublished, having much in common with those earlier pages of *Queen Mab*, which, probably suggested by Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, picture the fall of empires, and celebrates the oblivion that has overtaken the old rulers of men and lords of the earth.

At the same time Shelley was hard at work on *Queen Mab*. "In form," says Professor Dowden, "*Queen Mab* agrees with *The Voyage;* in substance it has kinship with *A Retrospect of Times of Old.*" On August 1st he addressed to Harriet a sonnet in honor of her birthday, anticipatory for them both of long years of loyal love and continued congeniality of minds. Of this Professor Dowden has published four lines in his *Life* of Shelley.[149]

Nor is this his only tribute to Harriet at this period. There survives also a longer poem in blank verse wherein, describing himself—as once earlier, and many times later—as a "lone spirit" on this earth which was not his home but his place of exile, and whose misery in this lot could only be relieved by

. . . the light of one sweet smile [150]

[148] For the details concerning this and the succeeding poem I am indebted to Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*. i. 284–5. Professor Dowden has published the only information available concerning both these early pieces.

[149] i. 286.

[150] *Stanzas,* April, 1814. Oxf. ed. *Poetical Works*. p. 571.

—the smile, for the present, emanating from the eyes of Harriet Shelley. As he had sworn to Miss Hitchener that she should be the "eternal inmate" [151] of his and Harriet's home, he now vowed to Harriet:

> . . . let death all mortal ties dissolve,
> But ours shall not be mortal! [152]

Time in his eyes was an accident not to be regarded except as its passing disclosed the deeds of a virtuous man active in the cause of virtue. For himself, he said:

> . . . if I wake no more,
> My life more actual living will contain
> Than some grey veterans of the world's cold school,
> Whose listless hours unprofitably roll
> By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed.[153]

The thought was to be reiterated in the *Notes* to *Queen Mab* (1813) as follows:

> Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our own mind. . . . Thus the life of a man of virtue and talent, who should die in his thirtieth year, is with regard to his own feelings longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave who dreams out a century of dulness.[154]

And Medwin has reported Shelley as "often" saying to him "that he had lived to be a hundred." [155] This peculiar flair for an appearance of premature age was a hobby much ridden by Byron.

[151] Letter, June 2, 1812. *Letters.* i. 312.
[152] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 287.
[153] *Ibid.* i. 288.
[154] Note to *Queen Mab.* viii. 203–7.
[155] Medwin, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* 1847. ii. 344.

In order to understand the next publication from Shelley's pen it is necessary to retrace our steps to the preceding March, when the Shelleys were in Dublin. Perhaps it was in the columns of Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* [156] for Sunday, March 15, that Shelley read of the prosecution of Daniel Isaac Eaton, bookseller of London, for the publication of the Third Part of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason.* That issue of the *Examiner* included a letter of protest from "A Friend of Free Inquiry, though a Determined Enemy to Infidelity," against this prosecution. On April 5, another letter in the *Examiner* subscribed by "A Plain Christian" from "Sussex, March 18" presented certain objections to the same prosecution which may have furnished Shelley with some hints for his own pamphlet. Said "Plain Christian":

Defending Christianity by Acts of Parliament and judicial penalties, is like making a law to arm and discipline a regiment of Quakers, who refuse to fight! . . . Servetus, the venerable Huss, and the incomparable Jerome of Prague, were burnt; Socrates was poisoned, and the Son of God crucified! . . . Of what crime has Eaton been guilty, which does not apply in a much higher degree, to the publishers of the works of Voltaire, Gibbon, and Hume? . . . According to these statues of intolerance, the names of Locke, Newton, Lardner, Priestley, Sykes, Hoadley, and others, scarcely less illustrious, ought to have graced the list of martyrs. . . . If Christianity do not possess a sufficiency of intrinsic excellence and external evidence to produce conviction—if the able pens of the Clergy, and the zealous efforts of Dissenters, be inadequate to protect it from the contemptible scribblings of a Paine, without the pious aid of the Attorney-General, pitiable, indeed, is its situation! . . . To believe whatever appears true,

[156] *Examiner.* No. 220. pp. 175–6.

and to do whatever appears right, is the ardent prayer of your Friend.[157]

On May 8 Eaton was "sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, and the pillory" [158] as punishment; and on the 26th of the month he appeared for the first time in the pillory. The *Examiner's* account of this first appearance is symptomatic of the tone of the more liberal organs of the day on this revival of mediævalism:

DANIEL ISAAC EATON

On Tuesday, at twelve o'clock, Mr. Eaton was placed in the pillory, opposite Newgate, it being part of the sentence imposed on him for having published the Third Part of Paine's *Age of Reason.*—If Government possesses a common portion of common sense,—to say nothing of humanity or justice,—this will be the last time they will have recourse to such an infliction for *such* an act.—No sooner was Mr. Eaton brought out from prison, than he was greeted by a distinct cheer of approbation, which was repeated every ten minutes during the scene; and when he had been exhibited an hour, he was reconducted to prison amidst the waving of hats and cheerings of the assembly!—During the period of his punishment, not a single voice or arm was raised against him;—on the contrary, those who were silent, appeared to take an interest in his sufferings; and those who spoke,—and there were many who did,—exclaimed against the harshness of the sentence, talked of its utter uselessness as to any good end, and of the folly of attempting to support the Christian faith by the prison and pillory.—And what was the consequence of subjecting Mr. Eaton to a punishment usually bestowed on the vilest of the creation? Why, a universal sympathy; and as soon as the scene closed, numbers flocked to Eaton's shop, in Ave-Maria lane, to purchase the report of his Trial!—Such will ever be the case, when guilt and punishment

[157] *Examiner.* No. 223, Sun., April 5, 1812.
[158] *Examiner.* No. 239, Sun., July 26, 1812. p. 474.

are so apportioned,—when *error* (allowing it to be error) is treated as crime,—and when the putting forth speculative *opinions* merely is visited by penalties, rather than exposed and corrected by arguments.—This is the last remnant of the faggot and fire system.—Another generation or two, and it will only be known as having disgraced the 19th century.[159]

This account is corroborated by the tireless Crabbe Robinson, who has recorded in his *Diary* that on May 26 he

Walked to the Old Bailey to see D. I. Eaton in the pillory. As I expected, his punishment of shame was his glory. The mob was not numerous, but decidedly friendly to him. His having published Paine's 'Age of Reason' was not an intelligible offence to them. I heard such exclamations as the following: 'Pillory a man for publishing a book—shame.'—'I wish old Sir Wicary was there, my pockets should not be empty.'—'Religious liberty!'—'Liberty of conscience!' Some avowed their willingness to stand in the pillory for a dollar. 'This a punishment? this is no disgrace!' As his position changed, and fresh partisans were blessed by a sight of his round, grinning face, shouts of 'bravo!' arose from a new quarter. His trial was sold on the spot. The whole affair was an additional proof of the folly of the Ministers, who ought to have known that such an exhibition would be a triumph to the cause they meant to render infamous.[160]

Perhaps these citations will make clear what I believe has been hitherto imperfectly apprehended or quite unknown [161]

[159] *Examiner.* No. 231, Sunday, May 31, 1812. p. 352. This account would have reached Shelley at Cwm-Rhayader, Wales, in time to provoke the sole reference to Eaton discoverable in Shelley's letters. See his letter to Godwin, June 11, 1812. *Letters* ii. 321.

[160] *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabbe Robinson.* ed. Sadler. 2nd. ed. 1869. i. 386.

[161] Cf. Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley. i. 290–1:* "A youth of nineteen, far from the world and the haunts of men, felt that he, *if no one*

—that Eaton's cause had created a great stir many months before Shelley essayed to discuss it in extended fashion; and that voices of protest against the government's prosecution had not been lacking before Shelley took up the challenge thus flung down by the court. Not only this; but from these quotations the very lines of attack which Shelley was to follow may be hypothecated, and these facts exhibit anew what is often forgotten: that Shelley was *of* his time, was conditioned *by* his time.

Singularly enough, however, the English poet who within a year was to become Poet Laureate was writing, in the month of Eaton's public pillory, this: "—nothing but an immediate suspension of the liberty of debate and the liberty of the press can preserve us. Were I a minister, I would instantly suspend the Habeas Corpus, and have every Jacobin journalist confined, so that it should not be possible for them to continue their treasonable vocation." [162] Thus far had Pantisocrat Southey traveled in two brief decades!

In a twenty-three page pamphlet of which, so far as is now known, but one copy [163] survives, and which was printed by a bookseller named Syle at Barnstaple, North Devon, in July 1812, Shelley assailed Lord Ellenborough for "an outrage—insulting to humanity and justice." Jeremy Taylor had pointed out in an earlier time that "Our faith in religion is most commonly imprinted on us by our country; and we are

else, must raise an indignant voice." The italics are my own. Perhaps Professor Dowden was misled by Shelley's foreword to the *Letter* in which he stated that he had "waited four months for some other writer to champion an innocent man." Did Shelley not mean, however, that none had yet done so by book or pamphlet?

[162] Letter of Robert Southey to J. Rickman, May 18, 1812. *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey.* ii. 342.

[163] Now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; (Shelley e. 1.)

Christians at the same rate that we are English or Spaniards, or of such a family. Our reason is first stained or spotted with the dye of our country, and our education puts in grain; and whatever is against this we are taught to call temptation." [164] In this very manner, Shelley urged, Lord Ellenborough being a judge of "Christian England," had deal with Mr. Eaton because the latter had dared to question established opinions.

In the first place, Shelley reiterated his contention, already presented boldly in the *Declaration of Rights*, that belief is not a matter of volition; that since it is not, no man can be held accountable and so be rewarded or punished for holding any belief. Second, to allege the sanction of the Divine in behalf of any power exercised to fortify certain tenets held favorable, or to crush others deemed unfavorable to the Divine, is anthropomorphism. It degrades God into man, and attaches to him the base passions of fame or vengeance. Third, a metaphysical doctrine needing the strong arm of the law or the military to sustain or promulgate it must be viewed with distrust. Here it will be observed, he was bordering on *Declaration of Rights* viii, and those other statements of this idea heretofore cited.

Not many months before he had urged upon the Irish people:

> If you are convinced of the truth of your cause, trust wholly to its truth; if you are not convinced, give it up. In no case employ violence.

Now he plead with Ellenborough to the same end. "It is true," says Percy Vaughan, "that it [the letter to Lord Ellenborough] suffers all through from the fallacy of assuming

[164] *Sermons.*

that Eaton was condemned for holding deistic opinions, whereas he was convicted of 'publishing a libel'—but the fault is a trifle.—The sentence on Eaton is at bottom only the text for a discourse ["grave and dignified" he calls it elsewhere] on the liberty of expressing opinions. Here Shelley is at his best, combining fire with dignity, and transcending his master Godwin, as well in the strength and grace of his prose as in passion and eloquence." [165]

The Letter, of which it has been alleged [166] that an edition of 1,000 was ordered by Shelley, and that not more than a tenth of this order was bound up, was disseminated by Shelley who on July 29 sent twenty-five copies to Thomas Hookham; [167] and on August 18 fifty more to the same; [168] while single copies were posted to Lord Sidmouth [169] later to be scathingly satirized in The Mask of Anarchy,[170] Lord Stanhope, Sir Francis Burdett,[171] and "some private friends." [172]

About this time Government, which not many years before had delegated a spy to watch the proceedings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Thelwall in the west country, heard through a faithful Barnstaple Dogberry of the activities of another poet-radical. Harriet Shelley in a letter to Catherine Nugent, June 30, 1812, complained of the Irish man-servant they had brought with them from Dublin: "I am afraid we shall be obliged to part with him, as we do not find him that useful

[165] *Early Shelley Pamphlets.* 29.

[166] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 290: "It is said that Shelley" etc.

[167] *Letters.* i. 340.

[168] *Letters.* i. 357.

[169] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 291.

[170] st. vi.

[171] Letter of Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent, Aug. 4, 1812. *Letters of Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* 1889. p. 17.

[172] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 291.

servant we expected to find he would have been. Percy has some thoughts of sending him to Dublin—but whether he will or not it is impossible to say." Shelley did not, apparently, send him to Ireland; but some time in August set him to work in Barnstaple carrying out the plan conceived some months before for the Irish campaign, but afterward abandoned.[173]

The result of the billposting is discoverable from the following letter [174] to Lord Sidmouth from Henry Drake, Town Clerk of Barnstaple:

My Lord,

I am directed by the Worshipful the Mayor of this Town to address your Lordship on the following circumstances.

Last evening a Man was observed distributing and posting some Papers about this Town intituled "Declaration of Rights," and on being apprehended and brought before the Mayor, stated his name to be Daniel Hill, and that he is a Servant to P. B. Shelley Esq. now residing at Hooper's Lodgings at Lymouth near Linton a small village bordering on the Bristol Channel and about 17 miles from Barnstaple. On being asked how he became possessed of these Papers, he said, on his road from Linton to Barnstaple yesterday, he met a Gentleman dressed in black, whom he had never seen before, who asked him to take the Papers to Barnstaple and post and distribute them, and on Hill's consenting, the Gentleman gave him 5 Shillings for his Trouble—On interrogating Hill more particularly respecting his Master, he said he principally lived in London but in what

[173] "I have been busily engaged in an 'Address to the Irish,' which will be printed as Paine's works were, and posted on the walls of Dublin."—Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 26, 1812. *Letters.* i. 234.

[174] H. O. 42/127, in the Public Record Office, London, first published, with some errors, by W. M. Rossetti, *Fortnightly Review,* 1871, pp. 68–69. The text given here follows the reading, capitalization, etc. of the original holograph.

Part of it he did not know, but that he had lived with him in Sackville Street—that he married a Miss Westbrooke or Westbrooks a Daughter of Mr. Westbrooke of Chapel Street Grosvenor Square and that two Sisters of Mrs. Shelley are now with her at Lymouth, and Mr. Shelley his Master's Father is a Member of Parliament.—This is all the Information the Mayor could get from Hill, but he has been informed that Mr. Shelley has been regarded with a suspicious eye since he has been at Lymouth, from the Circumstances of his very extensive Correspondence, and many of his Packages and Letters being addressed to Sir Francis Burdett—and it is also said that Mr. Shelley has sent off so many as 16 Letters by the same Post—The Mayor has also been informed that Mr. Shelley has been seen frequently to go out in a Boat a short distance from Land and drop some Bottles into the Sea, and that at one time he was observed to wade into the Water and drop a Bottle which afterwards drifting ashore was picked up, and on being broken was found to contain a seditious Paper, the Contents of which the Mayor has not yet been able to ascertain but will apprize your Lordship immediately on learning further particulars.

Daniel Hill has been convicted by the Mayor in 10 Penalties of 20 £ each for Publishing and dispersing Printed Papers without the Printer's name being on them under the Act of 39 Geo. 3 c. 79. and is now committed to the Common Gaol of this Borough for not paying the Penalties, and having no Goods on which they could be levied.

I have taken the liberty of transmitting to your Lordship a Copy of the Paper intituled "Declaration of Rights" and also another intituled "The Devil's Walk" which was also found in Daniel Hill's Possession.

I have the Honor to be
My Lord
Your Lordship's very obedt.
humble Servant

HENRY DRAKE
Town Clerk.

Barnstaple
Aug. 20, 1812.

The charge levied against the Irish valet was, we learn from a letter of Richard Jones, Deputy Postmaster at Barnstaple, that of "distributing Bills without the Printer's name." [175] Hill, when apprehended, had shielded his master, as we have seen from Drake's letter, by alleging that a "gentleman dressed in black, whom he had never seen before" had entrusted him with the job of circularizing Barnstaple. But Shelley was prompt to come to his servant's relief and on the 20th appeared at Barnstaple and endeavored to secure Hill's discharge. The man had, however, been fined £200, and this sum Shelley could not easily raise. Some "immunities and privileges" were, nevertheless, granted to the prisoner on the payment by Shelley of a weekly fee of fifteen shillings.

From endorsements on the letters sent by Drake to Sidmouth and by Jones to Freeling, we know that Dogberry and Verges were directed to watch Shelley; and that Lord Chichester, to whom Jones' letter was forwarded by Freeling, thought it would "have no effect to speak to Mr. Shelley's Family" since "they suffer already from his conduct." [176] Some surveillance had already been going on at Lynmouth; for in a subsequent letter (Sept. 9) Drake informed Sidmouth that at that village Shelley had "often been observed on the Beach in Company with a Female Servant (supposed a Foreigner) [177] and that he frequently in her Presence only" had "been observed to push out to Sea—from the Rocks, some

[175] H. O. 42/126.
[176] H. O. 42/126.
[177] Miss Hitchener? Hogg describes her as having a dark complexion.

LYNTON, VALLEY OF ROCKS

Where Godwin sought solace in nature for his disappointment at not finding the Shelleys at Lynmouth.

small Boxes," and that once one of these was brought back to land by an observer who had seen Shelley send it out. Drake reported that this man "on opening it—discovered a Copy of the—'Declaration of Rights.'" Drake had seen the box, and described it as "carefully covered with Bladder, and well resined and waxed to keep out the water, and in order to attract attention at Sea there was a little upright stick fastened to it, at each end, and a little Sail fastened to them, as well as some Lead at the Bottom to keep it upright." The Barnstaple deputy had also learned by Sept. 9 that Shelley had withdrawn from Lynmouth to Ilfracombe, and from the latter place, whither Drake followed him, to Swansea.[178] Shelley's school friend, Captain Gronow, writing of the event many years later, probably erred by two years in speaking of Shelley's visit to Swansea as of 1810. He says: "Soon after leaving school, and about the year 1810, he came, in a state of great distress and difficulty, to Swansea, where we had an opportunity of rendering him a service; but we never could ascertain what had brought him to Wales, though we had reason to suppose it was some mysterious *affaire de cœur*." [179] Captain Gronow would probably have laughed the more had he known that it was an affair not of the heart but of the police which sent Shelley flying across the Bristol Channel in the autumn of 1812.

Three weeks after the Shelleys withdrew to Ilfracombe, on Friday, September 18, William Godwin arrived, after a long, tedious journey from London *via* Bristol and Minehead, at Lynmouth. Naturally disappointed at not finding his young friends, Godwin might be forgiven an indulgence of temper,

[178] H. O. 42/127.

[179] *Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow.* ed. 1900. i. 155.

especially at the end of a two days' fast on his voyage by sea from Bristol; but being the philosopher that he was (on occasion) he set off for the Valley of Stones, determined, as he told his wife, since he "could not have what was gone away," he "might at least not fail to visit what remained." [180] At Lynmouth he called on Shelley's landlady, Mrs. Hooper, who, he found, "quite loved the Shelleys." She informed him that after living with her nine weeks and three days, they had been obliged to leave "in a great hurry, in debt to her and two more." But the Shelleys had paid their obligations promptly from Ilfracombe, and she was able to tell Godwin that they would be in London in a fortnight. "This quite comforts my heart," Godwin concluded to his wife.

[180] Letter to Mrs. Godwin from Lynmouth, Sept. 19, 1812. Kegan Paul, *William Godwin, His Friends and Contemporaries.* ii. 211. Ford Brown, in his *William Godwin* (1926) makes it clear that the philosopher's disappointment was largely that of a needy man who had hoped to secure financial aid from the poet.

CHAPTER VIII

TREMADOC: DUBLIN: LONDON: QUEEN MAB

The Godwin Family—Ianthe Elizabeth Shelley—New Friends.

"I KNOW not how it is," pitifully exclaimed Harriet Shelley, "that whenever we fix upon any particular place of residence something comes to take us to another." [1] The remark was born of the disappointment she felt that on leaving Devon they had not gone, as intended, to the Vale of Llangollen in Denbighshire, North Wales, but to the then-new town of Tremadoc at the head of Cardigan Bay in Caernarvonshire. A journey into the district where the Shelleys now settled has been described by Thomas Love Peacock:

They . . . emerged, by a winding ascent, from the vale of Llanberris, and after some little time arrived at Bedd Gelert. Proceeding through the sublimely romantic pass of Aberglasslyn, their road led along the edge of Traeth Mawr, a vast arm of the sea, which they then beheld in all the magnificence of the flowing tide. Another five miles brought them to the embankment, which has since been completed, and which, by connecting the two counties of Meironnydd and Caernarvon, excludes the sea from an extensive tract. The embankment, which was carried on at the same time from both the opposite coasts, was then very nearly meeting in the centre. They walked to the extremity of that part of it which was thrown out from the Caernarvonshire shore. The tide was now ebbing; it had filled the vast basin within; forming a lake about five miles

[1] Letter to Catherine Nugent (undated, but probably 1812) in *Letters of Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* 1889. p. 24.

in length and more than one in breadth. As they looked upwards with their backs to the open sea, they beheld a scene which no other in this country can parallel, and which the admirers of the magnificence of nature will ever remember with regret, whatever consolation may be derived from the probable utility of the works which have excluded the waters from their ancient receptacle. Vast rocks and precipices, intersected with little torrents, formed the barrier on the left: on the right, the triple summit of Moelwyn reared its majestic boundary: in the depth was that sea of mountains, the wild and stormy outline of the Snowdonian chain, with the giant Wyddfa towering in the midst. The mountain-frame remains unchanged, unchangeable: but the liquid mirror it enclosed is gone.

The tide ebbed with rapidity: the waters within, retained by the embankment, poured through its two points an impetuous cataract, curling and boiling in innumerable eddies, and making a tumultuous melody admirably in unison with the surrounding scene. The three philosophers looked on in silence; and at length unwillingly turned away, and proceeded to the little town of Tremadoc, which is built on land recovered in a similar manner from the sea.[2]

The embankment which was to save a considerable tract of land on the western side of the estuary Traeth Bach of Cardigan Bay, had been conceived by the Hon. William Alexander Madocks, M.P. for Boston, whose energetic efforts had previously reclaimed from the sea the land upon which the little town of Tremadoc stood. Perhaps this Madocks, who had had business dealings with some of Shelley's cousins in Sussex, was already known to Bysshe.[3] Be this as it may, Shelley had

[2] *Headlong Hall.* 1816. pp. 96–9.

[3] In a search of old Sussex manor records I have found that this gentleman-philanthropist was one of two executors of the estate of John Madocks, and acted for the latter as "party of the fourth part" to the marriage settlement (June 28, 1763) of Henry Shelley (d.1792) of Lewes, co. Sussex. This Henry Shelley was the great-great-grandson of the Henry Shelley (d.1623) who heads

From a contemporary print

Where the embankment project of the Hon. William Maddocks enlisted Shelley's co-operation.

no sooner established himself in Mr. Madocks' new villa, Tanyrallt, than he threw himself into a campaign to finance the completion of the embankment which had halted for lack of funds. Pledging £100 to the cause, Shelley in the company of John Williams, Madocks' agent, set out to canvass the gentlemen of the district in an effort to raise two or three thousand pounds. In a little while he had secured a sum which enabled the work to be resumed.

> The subtle witchcraft of his tongue
> Unlocked the hearts of those who keep
> Gold, the world's bond of slavery.[4]

Encouraged by these successes Shelley determined to carry the crusade into London and early in October set up his headquarters at Lewis' Hotel in St. James Street. With him were Harriet and Eliza. The Shelleys now for the first time enjoyed the society of the Godwins, among whom Harriet selected Fanny Imlay and Mrs. Godwin for special praise, and compared Godwin's head to that of Socrates.[5]

By November 10 the Godwin household was increased by the return from Scotland, where she had been visiting her friends Isabel and Christy Baxter, of Mary, daughter of the philosopher and his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin; and perhaps on the 11th of that month, on which date it is known that the Shelleys dined at the Godwins', Shelley and Mary met for the first time. But of this meeting we cannot be certain, since there is no extant record of it.

A reconciliation with Hogg, and the formation of new

the Shelley Pedigree published by H. B. Forman in his Library Edition of Shelley's *Prose Works*. 1880. vol. i.

[4] *Rosalind and Helen*. 652–4.

[5] Letter to Catherine Nugent, undated, but probably of October or November, 1812.

acquaintances in J. F. Newton and his family, already known to the Godwins, in Chester Street, Grosvenor Square, were events of this visit to London. Of Shelley's unexpected incursion Hogg has left a graphic record. "I had returned from the country," he says, "at the end of October 1812, and had resumed the duties of a pleader; I was sitting in my quiet lodgings with my tea and a book before me: it was one evening at the beginning of November, probably about ten o'clock. I was aroused by a violent knocking at the street door, as if the watchman was giving the alarm of fire; someone ran furiously up-stairs, the door flew open, and Bysshe rushed into the middle of the room. I had not seen him for a year; not since they left me at York. . . . Bysshe looked, as he always looked, wild, intellectual, unearthly; like a spirit that had just descended from the sky; [6] like a demon risen at that moment out of the ground." [7]

Newton had published his *Return to Nature: a Defence of the Vegetable Regimen*, in the preceding year; and as this book was to have an enduring effect on Shelley's work in prose as well as in verse, and upon the very ordering of his diet during a long series of years, it is perhaps fitting to note its general trend. Beginning with the contention that the Biblical story of the tree in the Garden of Paradise, and the Greek legend of Prometheus who dared to bring fire to men, were but two sides of an allegorical shield intended to teach the evil of a flesh diet, Newton recommended the corresponding benefits of a vegetable and fruit regimen to all households. When Shelley met Newton, *Queen Mab* was, as we have seen,

[6] Cf. Leigh Hunt's description of Shelley in his *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*. 1828, p. 177: "He was like a spirit that had darted out of its orb, and found itself in another planet. I used to tell him that he had come from the planet Mercury."

[7] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 165–7.

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MARY SHELLEY
By Stout

in the course of construction. It is not surprising then that in the note to canto viii, lines 211–12 of that poem we find him first paraphrasing the Newtonian argument and then quoting a paragraph from the book; and a few months later reprinting an altered prose version of this note as a separate pamphlet [8] concluding with the advice: "The proselyte to a simple and natural diet . . . must . . . never take any substance into the stomach that once had life, [and must] drink no liquid but water restored to its original purity by distillation." At the end of this pamphlet, in an *Appendix* we discover this interesting note: "It may be here remarked, that the author and his wife have lived on vegetables for eight months. The improvement of health and temper here stated, is the result of his own experience." [9]

Hogg [10] and Leigh Hunt [11] have left entertaining accounts of Shelley's adherence to a vegetable regimen. In Hogg's description of the simple fare offered to Shelley and himself in the home of the Boinvilles at Bracknell in 1814, there is subtle irony. "Dinner was not to be named: so gross a piece of sensuality was not to be thought of; at least, for that hour. But there was tea, excellent tea; tea in large cups, and in abundance, and thick bread and butter." The next morning "It was fully eleven o'clock," he said, "before I was allowed to set my longing eyes on tea and bread and butter for the second time." [12]

In order to form some rational conception of the person-

[8] *A Vindication of Natural Diet.* London. 1813.

[9] But cf. Peacock's view. *Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* in *Works.* 1875. iii. 411: "—it certainly did not agree with him; it made him weak and nervous, and exaggerated the sensitiveness of his imagination." Peacock also relates (p. 422) that Shelley's health was immensely improved in the autumn of 1815 by a return to a meat diet.

[10] *Life of Shelley.* ii. 414–427, *et passim.*

[11] *Examiner.* No. 615, Sun. Oct. 10, 1819, p. 653.

[12] *Life of Shelley.* ii. 525–6.

ality of Newton it is necessary to set against each other the description of the man left by Peacock [13] and Hogg.[14] As for the Newton family, and especially the children, whose beauty and good health are attested by Shelley himself in the note to *Queen Mab* already referred to, Hogg tells us that Shelley was an especial favorite with them [15] because he was willing to romp with them in the full spirit of their childish play. [16]

As it had required the test of entrusting Harriet to Hogg's care for a fortnight in 1811, to prove to Shelley how weak is this human flesh, so it had been more recently necessary that the intercourse with Miss Hitchener, "the sister of his soul" should end suddenly when Shelley found her "a cloud instead of a Juno"; not a bright being from some celestial sphere, but a "Brown Demon," and a "tormentress" [17] to the Shelleys. Thus, "poor Ixion starts from the centaur that was the offspring of his own embrace." [18] Sir Walter Raleigh has described Romance as "the magic of distance." [19]

In almost the only passage in Shelley's letters in which we see him admitting himself in error, he says, of his attitude towards Miss Hitchener: "She was deprived by our misjudging haste of a situation, where she was going on smoothly; and now she says that her reputation is gone, her health ruined, her peace of mind destroyed by my barbarity; a complete

[13] *Memoir of Percy Bysshe Shelley* in *Works*. 1875. iii. 405.

[14] *Life of Shelley*. ii, 424.

[15] *Ibid*. ii. 288.

[16] Cf. Thornton Hunt, *Shelley as I Knew Him*, in *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1863. p. 186.

[17] Letter to Hogg from Tanyrallt, Dec. 3, 1812. *Letters*. i. 367.

[18] Letter to John Gisborne from Lerici, June 18, 1822. *Letters*. ii. 975. The reference, though to Shelley's disillusionment as to Emilia Viviani, fits the earlier case equally well.

[19] *Romance: Two Lectures Delivered at Princeton University*. 1916. p. 37.

victim to all the woes mental and bodily, that heroine ever suffered! This is not all fact; but certainly she is embarrassed and poor, and we being in some degree the cause, we ought to obviate it. She is an artful, superficial, ugly, hermaphroditical beast of a woman, and my astonishment at my fatuity, inconsistency, and bad taste was never so great, as after living four months with her as an inmate. What would Hell be, were such a woman in Heaven?" [20] The *amende honorable* Shelley added to this was an annual stipend of £100 from his purse, and Miss Hitchener received the first instalment within a month of her departure from the Shelleys, which took place on or before November 8th. "Why am I talking of friendship," once wrote Mary Wollstonecraft, "after which I have had such a wild-goose chace.—I thought only of telling you that the crows, as well as wild-geese, are here birds of passage." [21]

This connection was no sooner severed than Shelley undertook to correspond with another unattached female, Fanny Imlay, or, as she was commonly known in the Godwin household, Fanny Godwin. Earlier in the year Aaron Burr, who had been frequently a guest in the home, wrote of the children in Godwin's care, "It is only Fan that I can trust." [22] And Harriet Shelley, reporting her impressions of the family to Catherine Nugent, said of Fanny: "She is 19 years of age, very plain, but very sensible. The beauty of her mind fully overbalances the plainness of her countenance." [23] Certainly the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay can-

[20] Letter to Hogg from Tanyrallt, Dec. 3, 1812. *Letters.* i. 367.

[21] *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.* 1796. p. 145.

[22] Mrs. Julian Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* (1889) i. 23.

[23] *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* 1889. p. 26.

not have been wholly perverted by the views of free love practiced by her mother and taught by her foster-father; for she told Shelley that she did not consider it proper that she should correspond with Harriet's husband. Shelley however, reassured her on this score much as he had reassured Miss Hitchener when that crafty woman queried whether Mrs. Shelley would approve such correspondence.[24]

A reference made by Fanny to Harriet as "a fine lady" roused Shelley to reply: "You indirectly accuse her in your letter of this offence—to me the most unpardonable of all. The ease and simplicity of her habits, the unassuming plainness of her address, the uncalculated connection of her thought and speech, have ever formed in my eyes her greatest charms; and none of these are compatible with fashionable life, or the attempted assumption of its vulgar and noisy *éclat*. You have a prejudice to contend with in making me a convert to this last opinion of yours, which, so long as I have a living and daily witness to its futility before me, I fear will be insurmountable." How is it that Shelley's partisans, ever eager to take up Hogg's charge that Harriet loved luxury,[25] and to repeat it, should consistently fail to set against it this testimony of Shelley to the contrary? Or why will they in their eagerness to reject Trelawny's statements as to the incompatibility between Shelley and his second wife in their attitudes toward social affairs,[26] pass over this early evidence of Shelley's confirmed antipathy to *conversaziones*, one thing is certain as to this letter. In it for the first and, with but one earlier exception,

[24] Cf. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 160. "I told Harriet of your scruples, for which there is not the slightest foundation: you have mistaken her character if you consider her a slave to this meanest of mean jealousies." Letter from Keswick, Nov. 12, 1811.

[25] *Life of Shelley*. ii. 358.

[26] *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*. 1858. pp. 54, 72.

only time in his history we see Shelley rising impassionedly to defend Harriet from calumniation.

He hoped, he told Fanny in this first letter (Dec. 10, 1812) to acquire by this interchange of views "an interesting and valuable correspondent." Perhaps this was all Shelley intended to obtain; and if the sequel had proved the fulfilment of his desire, we should today only add her name to the growing list of girls "enlightened" from time to time by this young Illuminée. But for Fanny, who might be excused for misunderstanding Shelley's use of affectionate terms,[27] the correspondence was to mean infinitely more; and in 1814 when Shelley should choose, not herself, but her half-sister as his mistress, there would begin for her an existence than which death at her own hands would be held more desirable. "She possessed," wrote Mary Shelley of "Evadne," [28] "a capacity for happiness. Her delicate organization and creative imagination rendered her peculiarly susceptible of pleasurable emotion. The overflowing warmth of her heart [which, had Fanny lacked, she would not have been the true daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft] by making love a plant of deep root and stately growth, had attuned her whole soul to the reception of happiness, when she found in Raymond all that could adorn love and satisfy her imagination." [29]

The earliest instance of Shelley's use of the Spenserian stanza is in the four-stanza poem, written *On Leaving London for Wales* in November 1812. In this, Shelley, as he looks forward to a return to the grand scenery of Wales, prays that its beauties may never for one moment permit him to forget

[27] Of which the letters to Elizabeth Hitchener furnish sufficient examples.

[28] The attempted suicide of Evadne takes place under the identical circumstances and on the same date that Fanny's suicide was effected in 1816. *The Last Man.* 1826. i. 280–2.

[29] *Ibid.* i. 275.

"the unfriended poor," but will nerve him to the task of inaugurating a new Saturnian era—the Age of Reason and Love—on this earth; an age in which malice and envy, revenge and suffering, should have no part. Shelley's analysis of society was throughout his life simple and elemental. Society, for example, could be divided into compartments labelled respectively, *rich* and *poor*. From Ireland in the preceding March he had written: "The rich *grind* the poor into abjectness, and then complain that they are abject. They goad them to famine and hang them if they steal a loaf."[30] Now, when he returned to Tanyrallt, he found conditions no better; and so told Hookham that Wales was "the last stronghold of the most vulgar and commonplace prejudices of aristocracy. Lawyers[31] of unexampled villainy rule and grind the poor, whilst they cheat the rich. The peasants are mere serfs, and are fed and lodged worse than pigs.[32] The gentry have all the ferocity and despotism of the ancient barons, without their dignity and chivalric disdain of shame and danger.[33] The poor are as abject as samoyads, and the rich as tyrannical as bashaws."[34]

But if Man was unkind, even in North Wales, Nature was not; and Shelley launched forth into encomiums in endeavoring to describe the beauty of the country to his friend Hogg. "The scenery is more strikingly grand in the way from Capel Cerrig to our house than ever I beheld. The road passes at the foot of Snowdon; all around you see lofty mountain

[30] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, March 10, 1812. *Letters*. i. 275.

[31] Cf. *The Devil's Walk: a Ballad*. st. xviii.

[32] Cf. *Œdipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot, the Tyrant*, Dramatis Personæ.

[33] Shelley frequently drew this contrast. cf. *Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*. (1817) in *Prose Works* 1880. ii. 108; and *A Philosophical View of Reform*. (1820; pub. 1920) p. 45.

[34] Letter, Dec. 3, 1812. *Letters*. i. 368–9.

peaks, lifting their summits far above the clouds, wildly-wooded valleys below, and dark tarns reflecting every tint and shape of the scenery above them." [35] And though the embankment project began to weary him, he found joy in the company of Harriet, in reading, and in writing. Here amid

> Feathery woodlands, falling, dipping,
> Down from the height to the river's edge [36]

the composition of *Queen Mab* went forward in the intervals of Shelley's excursions into the poetry of Spenser, Sir William Jones, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; the novels of Godwin; and Thomas Trotter's essay on the Nervous Temperament.[37] On January 16 he promised Hookham that the poem would be "finished by March," would contain ten cantos numbering in all 2600 lines, and would be followed by "long and philosophical" prose notes. In the latter, because he preferred not to present his principles "syllogistically" in the poem itself, he would propagate his principles. "A poem very didactic," wrote Shelley, "is, I think, very stupid." [38] Hogg had been taken into counsel as the poem proceeded, and on February 7 Shelley reported to him as follows: "With some restrictions, I have taken your advice, though I have not been able to rhyme. The didactic is in blank heroic verse, and the descriptive in blank lyrical measure. If an authority is of any weight in support of this singularity, Milton's *Samson*

[35] Letter, Feb. 7, 1813. *Letters.* i. 381.

[36] A. C. Benson, *Tan-yr-allt,* in *Poems,* 1909. p. 174.

[37] Ordered with many other works, from Clio Rickman by letter, Dec. 24, 1812. *Letters.* i. 372.

[38] Letter to Thomas Hookham, Jan. 16, 1813. *Letters.* i. 378–9. Shelley held to this belief. Cf. *Preface* to *Prometheus Unbound.* 1820: "Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse."

Agonistes, the Greek Choruses, and (you will laugh) Southey's *Thalaba* may be adduced." [39]

Nearly a year before—or, to be explicit—on the 22nd of March 1812, there had appeared in the London *Examiner* [40] then being edited and published by John and J. H. Leigh Hunt, an editorial entitled, "The Prince on St. Patrick's Day," which included a paragraph describing His Royal Highness as "a corpulent man of fifty . . . a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country, or the respect of posterity!" [41] It was not the first offence of this newspaper against the Powers That Were. Three prosecutions of the editors had broken down; but though Lord Brougham defended the brothers in the fourth suit, on February 3, 1813, they were found guilty of libel, sentenced to two years' imprisonment in different jails, and fined £1,000.[42]

In December 1812, Shelley, perhaps after reading the *Examiner's* accounts [43] of the progress of the Hunts' trial, burst out in a letter to Hogg:

Brougham's defence was certainly not so good as it might have been; it was fettered by the place wherein he stood. Entire liberty of speech was denied. He could not speak treason; he could not commit a libel; and therefore his client was not to be defended on the basis of moral truth. He was compelled to hesitate when truth was

[39] Letter to Hogg, *Letters*. i. 382.

[40] No. 221, pp. 177–180.

[41] *Ibid.* p. 179, col. 2.

[42] Cf. *Examiner*. No. 267, Sunday, Feb. 7, 1813; pp. 81–83, and 96.

[43] No. 259, Sun., Dec. 13, 1812, pp. 785–7; and No. 260, Dec. 20, 1812. pp. 801–8.

rising to his lips; he could utter that which he did utter only by circumlocution and irony. The speech of the Solicitor-General appeared to me the consummation of all shameless insolence, and the address of Lord Ellenborough so barefaced a piece of timeservingness, that I am sure his heart must have laughed at his lips as he pronounced it.[44]

His interest in the case persisted; and when the brothers were sentenced to prison and fined, Shelley wrote indignantly to Hookham: "I am boiling with indignation at the horrible injustice [45] and tyranny of the sentence pronounced on Hunt and his brother . . . I have £20 which is not immediately wanted. Pray, begin a subscription for the Hunts."

Was it Shelley's proposal coming through Hookham, which precipitated Leigh Hunt's editorial in the *Examiner* for February 21st on the *Sentence Against the Examiner, with an Observation or Two on Some Proposals of a Subscription?* [46] In this article Hunt respectfully declined the kind offers of friends to start a subscription for the relief of himself and his brother. If Leigh Hunt was in after years obliged to turn to certain of his friends for financial assistance, be it remembered that he met this first reverse—and a most serious one—bravely, and with a determination to take the whole of his share of the fine upon himself, to be repaid as soon as his talents could earn it. Dr. Barnette Miller is of the belief that the "crippling of his finances" which was the direct result of this fine "permanently disabled him"; [47] that this catastrophe overtaking the

[44] Letter to Hogg, Dec. 27, 1812. *Letters.* i. 375.

[45] Cf. *Examiner.* No. 269, pp. 113–114.

[46] "It was imprisonment that brought me acquainted with my friend of friends, Shelley. I had seen little of him before; but he wrote to me, making me a princely offer, which at that time I stood in no need of." Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography.* ed. 1860, pp. 241–2.

[47] *Leigh Hunt's Relations with Byron, Shelley, and Keats.* N. Y., 1910, p. 7. This book, useful as it undoubtedly is, is yet marred by most annoying and un-

young journalist-poet in the morning of his labors cut off forever the possibility of a successful business career for Leigh. This must be borne in mind in estimating the later Hunt who was obliged to turn to his friends for financial aid, and who was unkindly caricatured as "Harold Skimpole" in Dickens' *Bleak House.*

While in London, in October or November Shelley had met Thomas Love Peacock, *æt.* 17, author of *Palmyra* (1806), *The Genius of the Thames* (1810, 1812), and *The Philosophy of Melancholy* (1812); and so attached himself to one who was from that moment to become one of his few true and disinterested friends, and to whom a few years later he was to direct that series of travel-letters which stand alone, and unsurpassed, among all his letters, for color and variety and most graphic style.[48] Peacock probably recommended to Shelley the reading of a number of books, favorites of his, some of which were to have a marked influence on Shelley's poem, *Queen Mab,* then in the making. To three of these Peacock's biographer, Dr. Carl Van Doren, has already called attention.[49] Another work, previously consulted by Peacock as he was constructing *Palmyra,* has been shown to have con-

necessary inaccuracies; e. g., p. 79: "A projected review of *Adonais* alluded to in a letter to Hunt's does not seem to have seen the light of publication." On the contrary, the review appeared as promised in the *Examiner,* No. 754, Sun., July 7, 1822 (the day preceding Shelley's fatal voyage), pp. 419–21, under the title: *Letters to the Readers of the Examiner.* No. 6. *On Mr. Shelley's New Poem, Entitled Adonais.*

[48] The series of letters addressed to Peacock by Shelley from Switzerland in 1816, and from Italy, 1818–19.

[49] "It is likely that when Shelley sent to Clio Rickman on December 24 for books he included the list of Monboddo's *Origin and Progress of Language,* Sir William Drummond's *Essay on a Punic Inscription,* and Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley,* solely on Peacock's recommendation. All these books were favorites of the latter." Van Doren, *The Life of Thomas Love Peacock,* 1911. p. 56. Drummond's book may however have been called to Shelley's attention by a citation in George Ensor's *On National Education.* (1811) p. 199.

tributed much to *Queen Mab*,[50] and was probably first called to Shelley's attention by Peacock's word or work. Likewise, it seems probable that Peacock introduced Shelley to his publisher, Thomas Hookham, Jr., of Old Bond Street. On December 3, 1812, Shelley acknowledged receipt from Hookham of the second edition of the *Genius of the Thames, Palmyra, and Other Poems* (1812) and remarked concerning it: "I have read Mr. Peacock's verses. Independently of their poetical merit, they are accurately descriptive of the exquisite souls by whom I am encompassed."[51]

Shelley then related an incident from the private life of his new friend. "I was speaking of Mr. Peacock to a lady who knew him during his residence in Wales. In many respects she is a woman of considerable merit, and except in religious matters, a model of toleration. 'Oh!' she said, 'there Mr. Peacock lived in a cottage near Tan-y-bwlch, associating with no one, and hiding his head, like a murderer, but,' she added, altering her voice to a tone of appropriate gravity, 'he was worse *than that*, he was an atheist!' "[52] Shelley had endeavored to show the woman the intolerance of her remark, without producing the slightest effect. "Perhaps," Shelley mused, "*She does not do me justice!*" His pride in his self-allotted character of "atheist" was as green as ever.

Perhaps the meeting with Hookham suggested to Shelley the carrying out of a plan proposed nearly a year before, of selecting "the moral sayings" of Christ from the body of the

[50] Cf. L. Kellner, "Shelley's *Queen Mab* and Volney's *Les Ruines*," *Englische Studien*, 22: 9–40 (1895). But see later discussion, in the present study, of the interrelation of the work of Jones, Southey, and Shelley.

[51] *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 368.

[52] For another account of the suspicion in which Peacock was held by the country people cf. Van Doren, *Life of Thomas Love Peacock*. p. 59.

New Testament and issuing these as a separate publication.[53] On December 17, 1812, he promised Hookham that the *Biblical Extracts* as he now termed the work, would go to him from Tan-yr-allt "in a day or two by the twopenny post." In the same letter he queried: "Would not Daniel I. Eaton publish them?" A month later he gave Hookham more explicit directions: "I think that the type and size of Godwin's *Essay on Sepulchres* would be a good model for the *Biblical Extracts*. At all events I would wish them to be sent to the press." Again remembering the publisher on whose behalf he had written and circulated the *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*, Shelley referred Hookham to Eaton but suggested: "If you cannot have access to Eaton 250 copies would suffice. Small Christmas, or *Easter offerings* of a neat little book have frequently a surprising effect." [54] So far as we know, neither the Easter nor Christmas of 1813 nor any other church day was signalized by the appearance of Shelley's *Biblical Extracts*, for no copy of such a work is extant; and it is doubtful whether it was ever published.

The nineteenth of February found Shelley notifying Hookham that *Queen Mab* was "finished and transcribed." He stated that he was then at work on the notes, which should be copious and philosophical. At the time he purposed publishing *Mab* in a volume with the other poems upon which he had labored during the two years just past. This design was later abandoned.

More than two years had now passed since the band of ruffians, probably bent on robbery, had invaded the peace of Chestnut Hill Cottage, Keswick, had felled the poet, and had precipitated the hasty withdrawal of the Shelleys from that

[53] First proposed in letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, February 27, 1812. *Letters* i. 269.

[54] *Letters*. i. 378.

lovely Cumberland hillside to Ireland. The roving eye of Government had in the meantime, it is true, sometimes regarded Shelley with suspicion, and perhaps had made necessary one or two of his abrupt changes of residence. But if we except the arrest of Daniel Hill, at Lynmouth, and the ill-starred visit of Miss Hitchener, the domestic calm of the Shelley household had not been disturbed in the interim.

Shelley, however, at Tan-yr-allt invited trouble and trouble came at his bidding. Above Shelley's house, on a rocky plateau attainable from Tan-yr-allt by a series of Roman steps, grazed the inoffensive sheep of Robin Pant Evan, who was by all descriptions, "a rough specimen" of Welsh sheep-farmer. Some of these sheep being beset by scab or other disease, attracted Shelley's humanitarian interest, and as it was his custom to carry a brace of pistols about him, he was not unprovided with a remedy—albeit a desperate one—for their illness. Of course when Robin Pant Evan discovered the offense, and the identity of the offender, he was eager enough to be rid of so strange and unsatisfactory a neighbor.

Accordingly, about eleven o'clock on a wild night (the 26th) of February, Robin, in company with some of his friends, descended on Tan-yr-allt and intending to give Shelley a good fright, sent a bullet whizzing through the window of an office on the ground-floor. Shelley, who had been roused by noises below, had come downstairs, pistols in hand; and at the shot from the outside endeavored to return the fire. But his pistol "flashed in the pan" and in a moment he found himself struggling hand to hand with one of the invaders, who at length downed the poet. A shot from Shelley's other pistol next evoked a scream, and some loud threats from the marauder —in the sequel he proved to be Robin—who fled. Bysshe now mounted guard with Daniel Hill, who had arrived from

long confinement at Barnstaple just in time for the exciting episodes of this night.

About four in the morning, as Shelley was sitting in the billiard room, an arm was thrust through the window and another shot was fired, this time directly at Shelley, the bullet passing through the window-curtain and his dressing gown, but not injuring him. Again Shelley's pistol missed fire, but being courageous and resourceful he immediately seized upon an old sword and with it aimed a blow at the intruder. The latter was on the point of wresting it away when Hill rushed in and the stranger made his escape.[55]

The next day, not knowing by whom or why they had been thus attacked, the Shelleys and Eliza Westbrook left Tan-yr-allt for the company of friends, the Nanneys, seven miles away. On March 6 Shelley wrote Hookham from Bangor Ferry that his household had reached "the first stage" of their "journey to Dublin" at which city they expected to arrive on the 8th. He gave as his prospective address that of his friend, John Lawless, in whose project for a *History of Ireland* Shelley had been much interested on his former visit to Ireland. Hookham had kindly sent Shelley £20, which reached the poet at Bangor Ferry, and "rescued" him, as he said, "from a situation of peculiar perplexity." Storms delayed the voyagers, and they reached Dublin a day later than planned, "so poor," wrote Shelley, "that, unless we find some friend, I do not know what we shall do." [56]

[55] For the details of the night attack on Shelley at Tan-yr-allt I am indebted to two chief sources: Harriet Shelley's letter to Thomas Hookham, written from Dublin, Mar. 11, 1813. (Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, ii. 208–11), and Margaret L. Croft's article on "A Strange Adventure of Shelley's" in the *Century Magazine* (N. Y.) for October, 1905, pp. 905–9.

[56] Letter to John Williams from 50 Great Cuffe Street, Dublin, about March 10, 1813. *Letters*. i. 391.

From Dublin Shelley soon dispatched to Hookham the completed MS. of *Queen Mab*. Requesting the latter to criticize the poem as he should see fit to do, Shelley yet maintained that "in spite of its various errors" he was "determined to give it to the world", adding: "If you do not dread the arm of the law, or any exasperation of public opinion against yourself, I wish that it should be printed and published immediately." A new point as to the notes which were preparing was emphasized in this letter—their "anti-Christian" character. "This will be unnoticed in a note," Shelley assured Hookham. As for the probable sale of the volume he explained that he did not expect success. He would have 250 copies printed in "a small neat quarto, on fine paper—so as to catch the aristocrats." [57]

With the poem off his mind, Shelley evidently determined to seek out some scene of beauty and quiet, and went with Harriet, Eliza, and a servant (probably Daniel Hill) to the Lake of Killarney, where they set up an establishment on an island in the lake. Hardly, however, were they settled in their new quarters than word reached them that Hogg, who had like Godwin been repeatedly invited to visit them, had arrived at Dublin in accord with those invitations, only to find them flown to Killarney!

Packing up a few of their most needed effects, Shelley and Harriet began a race against time to reach Dublin before Hogg, discouraged over their unexpected absence, should quit it. Eliza remained at Killarney with the servant. Hogg, regarding her situation with amusement, related how Shelley "had left Eliza in charge of his library. He was evidently weary of angelic guardianship, and exulted with malicious pleasure that he had fairly planted her at last. He made no secret of his satisfaction, but often gave vent to his feelings

[57] Letter to Hookham, undated but of March 1813. *Letters*. i. 393–4.

with his accustomed frankness and energy. The good Harriet smiled in silence, and looked very sly." [58]

A year or so later, in reply to Peacock's remark: "It always appeared to me that you were very fond of Harriet," Shelley said, "But you did not know how I hated her sister." [59] I can find no evidence, however, that Harriet was ever less than devoted to Eliza, whom on the very eve of her suicide in 1816 she addressed as "My dearest and much belov'd sister." [60] It scarcely seems possible that Harriet would have addressed her thus if the story, credited by Dowden,[61] to the effect that Harriet "through her sister's influence, had been driven from her father's house" in 1816, had been true. On the other hand it is to be said that Harriet spoke with gentleness, in this same letter, of Shelley, who had deserted her. Perhaps an excess of charity swept over her in those last, dark hours.

But to return to Hogg, baffled in his quest in Dublin, we find that no news had come to him from the Shelleys, whom he had notified of his arrival. Being disinclined to follow them to their new address at Killarney, and his stock of funds being considerably diminished by his wait, on expense, at the Irish capital, he declared that at last he determined it was the part of prudence to return home as soon as possible. Wherefore he left Dublin on Tuesday, 30th March, for Holyhead

[58] *Life of Shelley.* ii. 264–5.

[59] Peacock, *Works.* 1875. iii, 418.

[60] Letter from Harriet to Eliza Westbrook, dated "Sat eve," and probably written on November 9, 1816. *Cornhill Magazine,* Jan. 1922. Cf. also Harriet's letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 29, 1812: "how oft have I blessed that providence who had given me such a treasure. Did you but know her as I do, you would not wonder at my love for her; her amiable qualities gain her friends in all who have the happiness of knowing her, but I will say no more as I am unable to do her justice." *Letters.* p. 247.

[61] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 66.

and London. "Two days and nights' hard travelling" brought the Shelleys to Dublin just in time (March 31) to miss their friend. Failing to make connections with Hogg there, they immediately determined to follow him to London, and two days later sailed for England.

Arrived in London, they lived, Hogg says, "some time at hotels" not long without Eliza, who soon "reappeared and resumed her sovereign functions" [62] in the Shelley household. By May 4th the Shelleys were quartered at Cooke's Hotel, Albemarle Street, and from this address Shelley endeavored to effect a reconciliation with his father, an effort in which the good offices of the Duke of Norfolk were again enlisted. But to no avail. Timothy Shelley would not open his arms to his son unless the latter would consent to disavow some of his beliefs, and apologize for his former views to the authorities at University College, Oxford. This Shelley would not do, defending himself for his obstinacy in a letter to the Duke:

> I was prepared to make my father every reasonable concession, but I am not so degraded and miserable a slave as publicly to disavow an opinion which I believe to be true. Every man of common sense must plainly see that a sudden renunciation of sentiments seriously taken up is as unfortunate a test of intellectual uprightness as can possibly be devised. . . . I am willing to concede anything reasonable, anything that does not involve a compromise of that self-esteem without which life would be a burthen and disgrace.[63]

Shelley and Harriet were now expecting the birth of their first child, and with the complete break-down of negotiations with his father, Shelley turned for a guarantee of financial assistance to his uncle, Thomas Medwin, Sr., of Horsham, whose advances of funds at an earlier day (1811) had

[62] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 265.

[63] Letter to Duke of Norfolk, May 28, 1813. *Letters.* i. 403.

made possible the flight of Harriet and Shelley to Edinburgh. Bysshe now inquired of his uncle, whether he himself was "heir to large property"; whether the papers attesting this could be seen; whether there was any doubt of his being "the safe heir to a large landed property." [64]

Then, on the 28th of June, it was to Medwin *père* that Shelley announced the birth of Ianthe Elizabeth Shelley, in a letter which, like the one which follows it in the present narrative, has hitherto been incorrectly printed:

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street
June 28, 1813.

My dear Sir

I am happy to inform you that Mrs. Shelley has been safely delivered of a little girl & is now rapidly recovering.—I could not however, leave her in her present state, & therefore still consider your proposal of fixing the interview in London as the most eligible.

I need not tell you, that the sooner I have the pleasure of seeing you, the sooner my mind & that of my wife will be relieved from a most unpleasant feeling of embarrassment and uncertainty.—You may entirely confide in my secrecy and prudence.—

I desire very best remembrances to all yours, & remain Dear Sir
Very faithfully yours perscribe [*sic*]
PERCY B. SHELLEY

[addressed outside]:
T. C. Medwin Esqre
Horsham
Sussex [65]

That Shelley was fond of this, his first child, from which

[64] Letter, June 16, 1813. *Letters*. i. 405–6.
[65] *Works*, 1926, ix. 73.

child—though Shelley could not know this—the poet's only living representatives were to derive their descent, there can be no doubt. "He was extremely fond of it," wrote Peacock, "and would walk up and down a room with it in his arms for a long time together, singing to it a monotonous melody of his own making, which ran on the repetition of a word of his own making. His song was 'Yáhmani, Yáhmani.' It did not please me," confessed the honest Peacock, "but, what was more important, it pleased the child, and lulled it when it was fretful. Shelley was extremely fond of his children. He was preëminently an affectionate father." [66]

Perhaps Medwin heard "Yáhmani, Yáhmani" for the first time when on July 7 he called on the Shelleys in response to the following invitation:

My dear Sir

I shall be most happy to see you at 6 o Clock to dinner tomorrow.—I think this plan is the better as the Horsham Coach will come nearer to this part of the town.—Mrs. Shelley unites with me in best remembrances to all your family.

I remain,
Dear Sir,
Yours very faithfully
P. B. Shelley. [67]

The Horsham attorney was again a guest at dinner at Cooke's Hotel on the 9th [68] and may afterwards have gone along with Shelley to a party given by the Newtons at Vauxhall. In a letter of July 27, written to Hogg from "High Elms, Bracknell," Shelley refers to his new residence quite

[66] *Works.* 1875, iii. 404.

[67] Now first correctly published from the original holograph in the Bodleian Library.

[68] The letter, in which the dinner appointment is mentioned, has been assigned to July 8. But it was dated "Friday" by Shelley; and the Friday of

casually as "home" and it seems likely that when this letter was written to Hogg, the Shelleys had been at their new address for at least a week. Harriet could scarcely have been physically equal to a removal to this country place—Bracknell is thirty miles from London—before July 15. The withdrawal from London to Bracknell we may reasonably believe, took place, then, some time during the fortnight commencing July 11.

The date is important for many reasons. It marked the beginning of Shelley's closest intimacy with Mrs. Boinville (a woman of means, and sister to Mrs. Newton) and her daughter Cornelia (later Cornelia Turner), whom Shelley may have met at Godwin's or at Newton's. Already in London Shelley had made a change of residence to be near these people, when they were living in town.[69] Hogg's description of the Boinville-Newton circle has been often quoted. Speaking of Mrs. Boinville first, he says:

> She was an amiable and accomplished old lady, and tolerably agreeable, but too much of the French school to be quite so, and the greater part of her associates were odious. I generally found there two or three sentimental young butchers, an eminently philosophical tinker, and several very unsophisticated medical practitioners, or medical students, all of low origin, and vulgar and offensive manners. They sighed, turned up their eyes, retailed philosophy, such as it was, and swore by William Godwin and Political Justice; acting, moreover, and very clumsily, the parts of Petrarchs, Werters, St. Leons, and Fleetwoods.

Hogg, by his own modest confession "a young English gentleman, of a liberal education, an Etonian and Oxonian," on

this week was the 9th of July, not the 8th. Cf. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 409.

[69] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 462.

Shelley's account "bore with the rabble rout for a little while," but at length growing "weary of persons so ill-suited to his aristocratical feelings and habits,—began to train off." One day Hogg dragged Shelley away from the very portals of the Boinvilles' house, took him off on a cross-country ramble, and at last conducted him to a coffee-room in Kensington, where, over a cup of tea they swore to abandon "the unprejudiced, levelling confraternity" [70] which made the Boinville home its rendezvous. But Shelley, if he took this obligation, did not fulfil it, for he now entered upon even closer association with these people in the quiet environment of Bracknell.

That his interest in Cornelia about this time aroused the fears of Shelley's wife was alleged by Mrs. Godwin, who, citing Harriet as her authority, related how in this year Shelley "had fallen in love with Mrs. Turner,—and paid her such marked attentions Mr. Turner, the husband, had carried off his wife to Devonshire." [71]

While Shelley was involved in the Boinville circle, Harriet, to whom solitary study had become somewhat wearisome, was getting what joy she might in walking out from the home Shelley had deserted for other companionship. Sometimes her footsteps brought her to a fashionable bonnet-shop[72] where she might purchase for herself the hat Shelley had not thought to secure for her, or had not been sensible that she needed; sometimes she walked back to that home whence she had fled in fear in 1811, finding its welcome now more warm than her lover's heart.

In August Harriet wrote Mrs. Nugent that she and Bysshe were thinking of making a jaunt to their "favorite Nant-

[70] *Ibid.* ii. 462–3.
[71] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 543.
[72] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 500–1.

gwillt";[73] and again in October Harriet promised her: "When we get to our dear Nantgwillt, then I may make sure of you"[74] (i. e., be certain of getting Mrs. Nugent to visit them). But this last was written by Harriet from Low Wood Inn,[75] on Windermere, in Westmoreland, to which she had proceeded with Shelley and Thomas Love Peacock about October 4. The Shelleys had set up a carriage of their own, —it is said, upon Harriet's demand—and had come north in it, accomplishing "a journey of more than three hundred miles" in one week.[76]

A book which almost certainly accompanied them as they went again into the north, a book they had not had on their previous journey, and which had furnished Shelley with the very name of his first-born, was *Queen Mab*, of which an edition of 250 copies had been printed in the late spring and early summer, but which had not been formally published because Shelley or Hookham discerned that it was "too much against every existing establishment" to be blazoned with impunity before the Lord Chancellor and other upholders of the established order. During Shelley's lifetime not more than seventy copies of the poem got into circulation; and from many of these Shelley cut away not only the imprint on title and last page: "Printed by P. B. Shelley, 23 Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square," but also the dedication leaf, on which the lines "to Harriet [Shelley]" appeared.

As Shelley had directed, Hookham prepared a book to

[73] *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 500–1.

[74] *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* p. 48.

[75] "*Low Wood.* A very good Inn on the margin of Winander Meer, of which from the Bowling Green you have one of the most magnificent views." Paterson's *A New and Accurate Description of all the Direct and Principal Cross Roads in England and Wales,* &c. 15th ed. 1811, p. 200. vol. 2.

[76] *Ibid.* p. 47.

"catch the aristocrats." *Queen Mab* was printed with a fine, clear font of type on a beautiful cream wove paper. There are generous margins; and if a canto ends on the recto of a sheet, the verso is left blank, an unusual proceeding indeed in printing a book which does not contain a series of separate title pages indicating its various divisions. The little volume was bound in boards, was without a printed label, and consisted of 123 pages of text, and 216 pages of notes.

In his *Memoirs of Jacobinism*, the Abbé Barruel as we have seen, had protested against the slogan of Voltaire: *Ecrasez l'infame!* which, the Abbé maintained, meant when translated: "Crush Christ! Crush the religion of Christ!" Shelley boldly employed the challenge of Voltaire as the first of three mottoes on the title page of *Queen Mab;* and followed it with other lines from Lucretius and Archimedes. A dedication leaf bore a poem *To Harriet* but because it was removed from many copies by Shelley before passing them on to friends, it is not always to be met with in copies of the first edition of this work. In it Shelley gives such apparently warm, sincere praise to Harriet that I can not forbear quoting it entire as evidence that at least as late as March 1813, when Shelley sent the MS. of this poem to Hookham to be printed, the poet regarded his first wife with devotion enough to celebrate her good influence over him by such a tribute.

TO HARRIET

Whose is the love that, gleaming through the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind;
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press unto thy breast this pledge of love,
And know, though time may change and years may roll,
Each floweret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine.[77]

Although within the short space of one year Shelley was to renounce and recant all faith herein pledged, and four years later was to dedicate to someone else other of his "early wilding flowers," there can be no doubt that at the time he sent these lines to Hookham to be printed with *Queen Mab*, he was sincerely in love with his wife; nor does it seem likely that this mood changed toward her before October or November 1813.[78]

[77] This dedication was omitted by Mary Shelley in her first collected edition (4 vols., 1839) of her husband's *Poetical Works;* but was restored by her in the second edition (1 vol. 1839). Medwin alleged (*Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* i. 68) that this dedication was to another Harriet—Shelley's first love, his cousin, Harriet Grove. But Medwin's statement is not credited, though the number of asterisks substituted for the last name of this Harriet would exactly suit the number of letters in her name. Medwin is likely to overestimate, rather than underestimate, the depth of Shelley's affection for his cousin. Moreover in at least one other instance, he has attempted (but how vainly!) to connect with her memory a poem of a later date, 1817, which was unquestionably written in remembrance of Fanny Godwin. Cf. Medwin, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 164, and the poem, *On Fanny Godwin*, in Oxford Edition, 1904, *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 600.

[78] Cf. article (by the present writer) on *Shelley in Edinburgh* in the eleventh *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*. January 1922. p. 85.

INTERCHAPTER IV

Queen Mab, Its Sources and Significance

"You have witnessed *one* suspension of intellect in dreamless sleep—you witness another in Death." Thus Shelley wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener, June 25, 1811. The conception reappears in the opening of *Queen Mab*, in a passage which, as Mary Shelley has pointed out, "bears a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea," to the opening of Southey's *Thalaba*.[79] Says Medwin: "Shelley's favorite poet in 1809 was Southey. He had read *Thalaba* till he almost knew it by heart, and had drenched himself with its metrical beauty."[80] The poet, gazing upon the sleeping Ianthe, wonders whether Death or Sleep now holds her enchained, for

> . . . her glowing limbs are motionless,
> And silent those sweet lips

—lines distinctly echoing Southey's description of Ladurlad brooding over Kailyal:

[79] As late as 1815, Mary says, *Thalaba* was "his favorite poem." It was first published in 1801. Note on *Alastor* in *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* i. 140.

[80] *Life of Shelley*. i. 60. For a remarkable instance of the influence of *Queen Mab* upon the work of another poet compare with the opening passage of this poem, Byron's *Sardanapalus* IV. i. 1–23.

While over her with earnest gaze he hung,
Silent and motionless she lay,[81]

and by this we are reminded of Shelley's declaration to Miss Hitchener that "*The Curse of Kehama*—is my most favorite poem." [82] Perhaps another description of Southey's pen:

Behold her beautiful in her repose,
A life-bloom, reddening now her dark-brown cheek [83]

suggested a further elaboration of Ianthe's appearance; but whether it did or not it is unlikely that Byron would have written the description in *Cain* [84] of the slumbering Enoch had not Shelley first said:

Her dewy eyes are closed,
And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
The baby Sleep is pillowed.[85]

In *Palmyra* [86] Shelley's friend, Peacock, had written of a

. . . dim mysterious sound
That breathed in hollow murmurs round,

and when Shelley wished to suggest the approach of Queen Mab in her magic car, he wrote:

[81] *Curse of Kehama.* 1810. iii. st. viii. In stanzas 6 and 7, preceding, the initial situation of *Queen Mab* is completely set forth: the unconscious girl, the fears of Ladurlad that this sleep may be death, etc. And cf. *Queen Mab* i. 66–7 for another echo of this Southeian passage.

[82] Letter, June 11, 1811. *Letters.* i. 94.

[83] *Curse of Kehama.* VI. st. v.

[84] iii. 26–30. The entire passage from 1. 10 to 1. 30 betrays its original inspiration to have been Shelley's description of Ianthe.

[85] *Queen Mab.* i. 37–40.

[86] Published 1806. ii. 11–12.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'Tis like the wondrous strain
That round a lonely ruin swells,[87]

echoing at the same time Southey's

Like the howl of a winter wind at night,
Around a lonely dwelling.[88]

The sound is then compared to that of the Æolian lyre a figure that had a perennial fascination for Shelley:

. . . that strange lyre whose strings
The genii of the breezes sweep [89]

in a passage that is almost certainly a revised version of lines in *Despair*, one of the poems in the *Margaret Nicholson* volume published at Oxford three years before:

Hark! I hear music on the zephyr's wing,
Louder it floats along the unruffled sky;
Some fairy sure has touched the viewless string—
Now faint in distant air the murmurs die.
Awhile it stills the tide of agony
Now—now it loftier swells— [90]

Mab arrives and in the manner of Arounin, in *The Curse of Kehama*, who "checked the rainbow reins," [91] curbs her own swift coursers by the use of her "lines of rainbow light." [92] Sir William Jones, describing the same character as that of Southey's poem, had pictured

[87] ii. 45–7.
[88] *Thalaba.* ix st. 20.
[89] *Queen Mab.* i. 52–3.
[90] *Despair.* ii. 10–15.
[91] *Curse of Kehama.* vii. st. 7.
[92] *Queen Mab.* i. 54.

Such heaven-spun threads of color'd light serene,
As tinge the reins, which Arun guides [93]

And elsewhere [94] portraying a similar situation, he had recounted how to "young Maia, fairest of the blue-eyed maids," as she was lying "near a crystal fountain"

. . . a sudden blaze of light
Shot through the clouds, and struck her dazzled sight.
She raised her head, astonish'd to the skies,
And veil'd with trembling hands her aching eyes;
When through the yielding air she saw from far
A goddess gliding in a golden car,
That soon descended on the flowery lawn,
By two fair yokes of starry peacocks drawn.

But though the latter description is from a work which furnished Shelley with many images in the gallery of canto i. of *Mab*,[95] Southey's account of the chariot of Arvalan bears an even closer resemblance to the passage (11. 60–62) introducing the coursers of Shelley's fairy queen:

The dragons, long obedient to command,
Their ample sails expand;
Like steeds well-broken to fair lady's hand,
They feel the reins of might.[96]

In his *Ruins of Empires*, Volney had related how "by the obscure light of the moon" there had appeared to the travel-

[93] *Hymn to Surya*, in *Poetical Works*. ed. 1810. ii. 108–9. Southey acknowledged his debt to Jones in the *Preface* to *The Curse of Kehama* (*Poetical Works*. 1838. viii. xv.) and in at least a dozen notes to that poem.

[94] *Palace of Fortune*, in *Poetical Works*. ii. 27–34.

[95] Cf. E. Koeppel, *Shelley's Queen Mab and Sir William Jones's Palace of Fortune*, in *English Studien*. xxviii. 43–53.

[96] *Curse of Kehama*. xi. st. 12.

ler in Asia Minor, "a pale apparition" in a manner similar to that in which Mab appears in Shelley's poem; this ghostly figure becomes the oracle of the author's philosophy. We may expect to find, as we proceed with the analysis of *Mab*, that Shelley was not unfamiliar with Volney's work when he was writing his first major poem.[97] Mab for some time gazes silently upon the sleeping Ianthe, as we have seen that Ladurlad hung "with earnest gaze"[98] over "the divine Kailyal"[99] in *The Curse of Kehama;* and as the goddess regarded the sleeping Maia in *The Palace of Fortune.*[100]

How closely Shelley's description of Mab followed Southey's description of Glendoveer in *The Curse of Kehama*, may be judged from the following:

. . . never yet did form more beautiful,
In dreams of night descending from on high,
Nor like a vision of delight,
Rise on the raptured Poet's inward eye.
Of human form divine was he—
—*Curse of Kehama.* vii. st. 4.

Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams,
When silvery clouds float through the wildered brain,
When every sight of lovely, wild, and grand
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
So bright, so fair, so wild a shape
Hath ever yet beheld
—*Queen Mab.* i. 68–71, 74–5.

[97] Cf. L. Kellner, *Shelley's Queen Mab and Volney's Les Ruines,* in *Englische Studien.* xxii. 9–40. There are later echoes of Volney in Shelley's work. Cf., for example, *Alastor,* 106–128, with Volney, *Ruins,* ii. third paragraph.

[98] *Curse of Kehama.* iii. st. 8.

[99] Shelley thus described Southey's heroine in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, June 11, 1811. *Letters,* i. 94.

[100] Jones, *Poetical Works.* ed. 1810. ii. 149:

The goddess still with looks divinely fair
Surveys the sleeping object of her care

And though the rest of Shelley's portrait of the fairy and some lines of nature description, do not follow Southey's so closely as the preceding, they nevertheless betray their source:

Its hue?—Go watch the last green light
Ere Evening yields the western sky to night.
. . . his glorious pennons . . .
Richer than robes of Tyrian dye: that deck Imperial Majesty:
Their colour like the winter's moonless sky
. . . . . .
Or as the morning clouds refulgent shine
—*Curse of Kehama.* vii. st. 2, 5.

The night-wind is abroad,
Aloft it moves away the stirring trees;
He only heard the breeze
—*Curse of Kehama.* v. st. 7.

She heard not now the Tyger's nearer cry
—*Ibid.* v. st. 12.

The Fairy's frame was slight, yon fibrous cloud,
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,
—*Queen Mab.* i. 94–102.

Those who had looked upon the sight
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
—*Ibid.* i. 85, 89.

Mab awakens the spirit of Ianthe, who has been judged "worthy of the envied boon" awarded to the good and sincere

. . . who have struggled and with resolute will
Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains,

The icy chains of custom, and have shone
The day-stars of their age.

Similarly, four years later, Shelley was to praise Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, saying:

How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among.[101]

But before this latter description was written, the lines in *Mab* had been revised (for *The Dæmon of the World*, 1816) to read:

Custom and Faith and Power thou spurnest;
From hate and awe thy heart is free,
Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,
For dark and cold mortality
A living light, to cheer it long,
The watch-fires of the world among,[102]

lines which bridge the gap between the two passages previously quoted, and completing the series reveal the steady growth of Shelley's critical sense and ability as an artist.

The poet now sees the body of Mab lying in sleep, while the soul stands forth glorious,

Immortal amid ruin.[103]

The sight moves him to contrast the eternity of the soul with the mortality of this earthly frame. Little more than a year earlier he had written to Miss Hitchener concerning Godwin:

[101] Dedication to *Laon and Cythna*. 57–60.
[102] II, 90–95.
[103] Cf. *Adonais*. 88; and *Thalaba*. ix., 404–5, and 513–18.

"though his shell is mouldering the spirit within seems in no wise to participate in the decay." [104] Thinking along these lines, he had also declared to her his conviction that as to the love of the flesh and love of the spirit "the one perishes with the body whence on earth it never dares to soar, the other lives with the soul which was the exclusive object of its homage." [105]

The separation of body and spirit effected by Mab in Shelley's poem stood thus in Volney's prose, in which the Genius of the Tombs is described as

> approaching me, and placing his hand upon my head, Rise, mortal, said he, and disengage yourself from that corporeal frame with which you are incumbered.—Instantly, penetrated with a celestial flame, the ties that fix us to the earth seemed to be loosened.[106]

It has been pretty well established that Shelley consulted Volney's *Ruins of Empires* while working out *Queen Mab*.[107] Perhaps his friend Peacock, who had already employed Volney's book for the same purpose in composing his poems, *Palmyra* and *The Genius of the Thames*, called it to Shelley's attention when they met in London in the late autumn of 1812. Hogg has remarked that for some time prior to the summer of 1813 Harriet had read aloud to him from this work,[108] which was, he said, one of her "text-books." [109]

In the *Ruins*, as in *Mab*, the sleeper is selected because of a virtuous character. At the invitation from Mab:

> Ascend the car with me

[104] Letter, Jan. 20, 1812. *Letters.* i. 226.
[105] Letter, November 24, 1811. *Letters.* i. 173. Cf. *Queen Mab.* i. 138–56.
[106] *Ruins of Empires.* ed. 1811, pp. 14–15.
[107] Cf. Note 99 of the present chapter.
[108] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 266.
[109] *Ibid.* ii. 183.

(which is plagiarized from Southey)[110] Ianthe's spirit is borne off through space by Mab, to whom

> . . . is knowne that was, that is, and that that shall ensue,[111]

and who promises to reveal these to Ianthe, as the Genius had promised to unfold the meaning of history to the Traveller, in the *Ruins*.[112] The manner of the departure of Mab and her fair guest is also reminiscent of the Glendoveer's rescue of Kailyal in *The Curse of Kehama*,[113] and of Maimuna's conveying away of Thalaba.[114]

By 1821, when Byron constructed his drama, *Cain*, he must have read *Queen Mab;* for in the course of that play there are many echoes of Shelley's poem. Among these a passage in the Second Act, describing the revelations of Lucifer to Cain as he bears the latter through space, was quite clearly dependent for its plan and some of its imagery on the description of the journey taken by Mab and Ianthe through the heavens.[115] Yet Shelley's description of the progress of Mab's car, while

> Far, far below the chariot's path
> Tremendous Ocean lay.

recalls Southey's

> Far, far beneath them lies
> The gross and heavy atmosphere of earth.[116]

They watch the procession of the planets and the wandering stars, some of which

[110] *Thalaba.* iv. sect. 37.
[111] Ovid. *Metamorphoses.* Golding's translation. 1631.
[112] *Ruins of Empires.* p. 9.
[113] vi. st. 3.
[114] *Thalaba.* viii. sects. 30–34.
[115] *Cain. II.* i. 29–31, 34–43; and see also II. i. 118–126, III. i. 178–183.
[116] *Curse of Kehama.* vii. st. 7.

. . . dashed athwart with trains of flame,
Like worlds to death and ruin driven.

"How solemn is the moment," wrote Mary Wollstonecraft, "when all affections and remembrances fade before the sublime admiration which the wisdom and goodness of God inspires, when he is worshipped in a *temple not made with hands*, and the world seems to contain only the mind that formed, and the mind that contemplates it! These are not the weak responses of ceremonial devotion; nor, to express them, would the poet need another poet's aid: his heart burns within him, and he speaks the language of truth and nature with resistless energy." [117] Thus Shelley, in the passage next succeeding, shakes free from the tyranny of his poetic mentors and exclaims, in his own voice:

Spirit of Nature! here!
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the lightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee:
Yet not the meanest worm
Less shares thy eternal breath.
Spirit of Nature! thou!
Imperishable as this scene,
Here is thy fitting temple.

In this are the germs of later English poetry. In William Cullen Bryant's *Forest Hymn* we find the idea presented in Shelley's last line introduced at the very outset of the poem:

[117] *Posthumous Works of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman.* 1798. iv. 163–4.

The groves were God's first temples
. . . Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at least,
Here, in the shadows of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn—[118]

Unlike Shelley, Bryant in his *Hymn* acknowledges the presence of God in Nature; for he addresses Deity to say of all natural phenomena that they are "instinct with thee."

Mab conducts Ianthe to her palace, which owes something [119] of its appearance to Sir William Jones' Palace of Fortune in his poem of that title, but more to Southey's account of the Palace of Indra in *The Curse of Kehama*, as may be seen from the following:

. . . likest evening's vault, that fairy Hall!
As Heaven, low resting on the wave it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome,
Its fertile golden islands
Floating on a silver sea.
Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted

. . . the Palace, whose far-flashing beams,
With streaks and streams of ever-varying light.
—*Curse of Kehama*. xii, 7.

Built on the Lake the waters were its floor;
And here its walls were water arched with fire
And domes of rainbow rest on fiery towers;

[118] ll. 1, 16–22.

[119] But perhaps the temple, resting by the water, was suggested by Shelley's visiting the ruined Druid temple which had been discovered in 1770 on Pocklington's Island, Derwentwater Lake, Keswick. Paterson, *op. cit.* 347. col. 2.

Through clouds of circumambient darkness,
And pearly battlements around
Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.
—*Queen Mab.* ii. 30–9.

Gleams of the glory, streaks of flowing light,
Openings of heaven, and streams that flash at night
In fitful splendour, through the northern sky.
—*Curse of Kehama.* vii. st. 10.

The sunbeams on the gilded portals glanc'd;
Played on the spires, and on the turrets danc'd;
—*Palace of Fortune.* 101.

And roofs of flame are turreted around
With cloud, the shafts of cloud with flame are bound.
—*Curse of Kehama.* vii. st. 10.

Mab tells Ianthe that, glorious as the palace is, the will of Nature would yet be unfulfilled if the only part virtue could play were one of idleness in the midst of so beautiful a place. The thought is but a reiteration of what Shelley had told the Irish people: "But benevolent feeling will not be kept alive by each citizen sitting quietly by his own fireside, and saying that things are going on well, because the rain does not beat on *him*, because *he* has money and is at liberty to accumulate luxuries to himself. Generous feeling dictates no such feelings." [120]

They go out to a battlement of the palace, whence they can see the universe stretched out below them. Perhaps Shelley had read Miss Whately's lines in her *Hymn to Solitude:*

[120] *Proposals for an Association,* in *Prose Works.* ed. 1880 i. 371–2.

. . . active Fancy takes her flight
Wide o'er th' etherial plains;
Soars through the trackless realms of space,
Sees endless systems roll;
Whilst all harmoniously combine
To form one beauteous whole.[121]

Whether he had or not, it is certain that he must, before writing the lines below, have seen Southey's description of the rapid procession of the spheres. Compare:

Below lay stretched the universe!
There, far as the remotest line
That bounds imagination's flight,
Countless and unending orbs
In mazy motion intermingled,
Yet still fulfilled immutably
Eternal Nature's law.
—*Queen Mab.* ii. 70–76.

Here too the elements forever veer
Ranging around with endless interchanging;
Pursued in love, and so in love pursuing,
In endless revolutions here they roll;
For ever their mysterious work renewing;
The parts all shifting, still unchanged the whole,
—*Curse of Kehama.* vii, st. 10.

And in this connection is it not possible to see in this same passage in the *Curse* the germs of the lines in Hellas:

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to a decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
Sparkling, bursting, borne away[122]

[121] *Poems by Various Hands.* ed. Dodsley. 1770. iii. 128.
[122] ll. 197–200.

"Observing—these clouds," wrote Volney, "I perceived that they were preceded or followed by swarms of living beings, which, like ants disturbed by the foot of a passenger, were in lively action." [123] In *Queen Mab* we have the adaptation:

> The Fairy pointed to the earth.
> The Spirit's intellectual eye
> Its kindred beings recognized.
> The thronging thousands, to a passing view,
> Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.[124]

Volney's description "of the melancholy and memorable" [125] city of Palmyra had, as we have seen, furnished Peacock with a subject and title for one of his early poems,[126] in which we may read:

> Fate comes on, with ruthless frown,
> To strike Palmyra's splendor down.[127]
> Where, broad and swift, Euphrates flows,
> The trav'ller's anxious eye can trace no more
> The spot where once the Queen of Cities rose.[128]

It seems likely that Shelley's song of mourning over this city [129] arose from reading these lines from the pen of his friend; and that the following parallels help us to understand the intensity of Shelley's admiration for the poetry of Peacock and Southey at this time.

[123] *Ruins of Empires.* ed. 1811. p. 43.
[124] ii. 97–101.
[125] *Ruins of Empires.* ed. 1811. p. 18.
[126] *Palmyra.* 1806.
[127] st. xvii. 3–4.
[128] st. xxi. 2–4.
[129] *Queen Mab.* ii. 109–125.

Those Pyramids shall fall;
Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell
The spot whereon they stood!
Their very site shall be forgotten,
As is their builder's name.
—*Queen Mab.* ii. 129–133.

There once old Salem's haughty fane
Reared high to Heaven its thousand golden domes,
—*Ibid.* ii. 137–8.

Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood,
There is a moral desert now;
—*Ibid.* ii. 162–3.

Spirit, ten thousand years
Have scarcely passed away,
Since, in the waste . . .
Arose a stately city,
Metropolis of the western continent:
There the wide forest scene
Seems to the unwilling sojourner,
Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.
—*Ibid.* ii. 182 ff.

His slumbers are but varied agonies,
They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.
—*Ibid.* iii. 77–8.

Then shall the stranger pass, and oft be told,
"Here stood the mighty pyramids of old!"
And smile, half-doubtful, when the tale he hears,
That speaks the wonders of the distant years.
—*Palmyra.* st. xxii, 11–14.

Its thousand dwellings, o'er whose level roofs
Fair cupolas appear'd, and high-domed mosques.
—*Thalaba.* v. st. 5.

Proud Salem met th' irrevocable doom.
—*Palmyra.* st. xxi. 14.

Where are the states of ancient fame?
Athens, and Sparta's victor-name,
. . . . . .
All-grasping Rome, that proudly hurled
Her mandates o'er the prostrate world,
Long heard mankind her chains deplore
And fell as Carthage fell before
—*Genius of the Thames.* II. xl.

Perchance, when many a distant year,
Urged by the hand of fate, has flown,

. . . yon squalid form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome mine
—*Ibid.* iv. 33–27.

Ah! whence yon glare
That fires the arch of Heaven? that dark red smoke
Blotting the silver moon? The stars are quenched
In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow
Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round!
—*Ibid.* iv. 33–37.

Hark to that roar whose swift and deaf'ning peals
In countless echoes through the mountains ring,
Startling pale Midnight on her starry throne!
Where moonbeams rest on ruins drear,
The musing sage may muse alone;
. . . there, in days of elder time,
The world's metropolis arose;
—*Ibid.* II. xxxix.

And narrow cares, and wrathful strife
Dry up the sweetest springs of life.
—*Ibid.* I. xix.

For thee amid the dreary mine
The patient sufferers toil
—*Ibid.* I. xv.

Vainly, ye blessed twinklers of the night,
Your feeble beams ye shed,
Quench'd in the unnatural light which might outstare
Even the broad eye of day;
And thou from thy celestial way
Pourest, O Moon, an ineffectual ray!
For lo! ten thousand torches flame and flare
Upon the midnight air,
Blotting the lights of heaven
With one portentous glare.
Behold the fragment smoke in many a fold

Now swells the intermingling din.
—*Ibid.* iv. 38–41.

Even love is sold
—*Ibid.* v. 189.

. . . the costly altars smoked
With human blood
—*Ibid.* vii. 98–9.

. . . those who marked
As Vessels to the honour of their God,
May . . . save
Their souls alive.
—*Ibid.* vii, 140, 142–3.

. . . the Incarnate came; humbly he came
. . . in the shape
Of man
—*Ibid.* vii, 163.

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in steadfast darkness
—*Ibid.* ix. 138–9.

Ascending, floats along the fiery sky,
And hangeth visible on high,
A dark and waving canopy.
—*Curse of Kehama.* i, st. 2.

Hark! 'tis the funeral trumpet's breath
'Tis the dirge of death!
At once ten thousand drums begin,
With one long thunder-peal the ear assailing;
—*Ibid.* i. st. 3.

Love is bought and sold
—Peacock. *In the Days of Old.*

And human blood had oft bedewed
Their ghastly altars
—*Genius of the Thames.* I. XVII.

But who am I, that I should save
The sinful soul alive?
—*Thalaba.* xi. st. 28.

. . . lighter crimes than his
Have drawn the Incarnate down among mankind
—*Curse of Kehama.* iv. st. 6.

Time . . .
Wheels around in ceaseless flight,
Scattering from his hoary pinions

Shades of everlasting night
—*Genius of the Thames.* II. xlii. 1–4.

In addition, there is a general similarity between *Queen Mab* iii. 192–203 and *The Genius of the Thames,* I. xii, and a very close resemblance between *Queen Mab,* iii. 138 seq., and Peacock's poem, *Time.* This latter work being, however, without date we cannot assert with assurance whether Shelley had his imagery from Peacock, or *vice versa.* Sometimes passages are encountered in *Queen Mab* which though perhaps partly derived from some author of Shelley's day may indicate only that both Shelley and this writer had a common source. An example of this is Shelley's

Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb,
—*Queen Mab.* v. 1–2.

which reminds one of Southey's

What countless generations of mankind
Have risen and fallen asleep;
—*Thalaba.* i. st. 49.

or of Godwin's "generations of men are perpetually going off the stage, while other generations succeed" (*Political Justice,* i. 107); but Shelley's note on his own passage cites *Ecclesiastes,* i. 4-7, and perhaps it was from the Bible and not from intermediate sources that Shelley had his suggestion.

Philosophy begins to enter the poem where Shelley in canto ii asserts the underlying unity of Nature, constituting in the midst of apparent dissimilitude an actual, spiritual similitude; and with a vast host of separate living entities weaving an un-

broken chain of life. That the deity responsible for this lovely world had ever given his sanction to war, Shelley denied,[130] as Volney had denied before him.[131] That kings had the right to gratify their vanity by employing their fellowmen to construct gorgeous palaces, Shelley also denied,[132] and here began to give his political views. Humanity, thinks Shelley, has sunk a long way to produce, on the spot where Socrates died, a brainless king; and where Cicero and Antoninus abode, a lying priest. The desolate site of Thebes [133] points the bane of commercialism, for here had

> . . . wealth, that curse of man,
> Blighted the bud of its prosperity:
> Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
> Fled, to return not, until man shall know
> That they alone can give—bliss.[134]

There is a recurrence to the thought of the unity of nature [135] and the immutable laws ruling animate as well as inanimate matter.[136]

Canto iii. opens with an affirmation of Shelley's belief, which is better expressed in a later poem in the lines:

> Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek
> But in our minds? *and if we were not weak*
> *Should we be less in deed than in desire?* [137]

[130] ii. 155 ff.

[131] *Ruins of Empires.* ed. 1811. p. 47: "do you think that he, whom you call Father of all, can receive with complacence the homage of free-booters and murderers?"

[132] ii. 137–48.

[133] Shelley does not name this city, but Volney does, cf. *Queen Mab.* ii. 187 ff. with Volney, *Ruins.* p. 17.

[134] ii. 204–8.

[135] ii. 211–34.

[136] ii. 235–43.

[137] *Julian and Maddalo.* 174–6. The italics are my own.

A king, tormented in dreams by the serpents of a guilty conscience, suffers while he yet lives, says Shelley, and makes a Hell hereafter unnecessary. What he is, he is not by deliberate choice, but partly at least because he

> . . . thinks, feels, acts, and lives
> Just as his father did,[138]

and because he is hemmed round by a network of precedent and custom. Shelley extends his attack to include the courtiers who bask in courts and fatten on their corruption. In a passage most amazing in that it came from a youth born to an aristocratical heritage, he asks:

> . . . what are they?
> The drones of the community; they feed
> On the mechanic's labour: the starved hind
> For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield
> Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid form,
> Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
> A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,
> Drags out in labour a protracted death,
> To glut their grandeur; many faint with toil,
> That few may know the cares and woes of sloth.[139]

The unsparing severity of this was to reappear again in the series of poems which in 1819 Shelley purposed to publish and circulate among the laboring classes, then in great distress.[140] When men realize, argued Shelley, that vice and rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong; revenge, and murder, and the sovereignty of kings are all delusions whose fruits are

[138] *Queen Mab.* iii. 96–7.
[139] iii. 108–17.
[140] Letter to Leigh Hunt, May 1, 1820. *Letters.* ii. 778.

man's perennial ills, they will throw off their superstitions, turn to virtue, and find peace and happiness.[141] Tyrants might hold forth for their little day; retribution lurked for them just around the corner of Time. Macbeth had said:

> Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more.[142]

Shelley paraphrases [143] Macbeth's speech, leaning on Shakespeare only in the case of one phrase: "*Tomorrow* comes!" which so appeals to him that he repeats it in the fourth canto.[144]

The blank verse rises to a considerable degree of dignity in the passage:

> Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
> The subject, not the citizen; for kings
> And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
> A losing game into each other's hands,
> Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
> Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys.
> Power, like a desolating pestilence,
> Pollutes what'er it touches.[145]

[141] iii. 122–38
[142] *Macbeth*. V. v. 19–26.
[143] iii. 138–150.
[144] l. 25.
[145] iii. 170–7.

As an evidence of the last statement he cites the "submissive abjectness" of Rome under the tyranny of Nero. In a passage [146] greatly resembling one in Peacock's *Genius of the Thames* [147] he protests that into the "peace, harmony, and love" exhibited in the life of Nature, Man permits war and tyranny to enter and despoil the bower that is their rightful home. The state ensuing, in which a part of mankind lives in indolent luxury while the other part can scarcely eke out a miserable existence, is contrary to the Spirit of Nature whose ultimate power must correct this; even in his waywardness Man is unconsciously forwarding the ends of that great Spirit whose will in the end must prevail.

Canto iv, opening with a second echo of the first line of *Thalaba*, but now a clearer echo than before, flashes a picture before us which might have been the result of Shelley's direct observation, in 1811, of the contrasting scenes of calm and storm in the English Lakes.[148] The previous arguments against priestcraft and war are now dramatized, and numbers are seen gathering for conflict which, being precipitated, ends in slaughter and ultimate silence. Nor will Shelley accept the current explanation that these horrors are the direct consequence of the depravity of the average citizen in the state. Instead he contends:

> From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,
> . . . Let the axe
> Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall,[149]

[146] iii. 192–202.
[147] I. xii.
[148] iv. 1–33.
[149] iv. 80, 82–3.

A garden shall arise, in loveliness
Surpassing [150] fabled Eden.[151]

The teaching of the Church that "all sinned in Adam" he rejects, exclaiming:

Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery.[152]

Nature, that provides bountifully for animal and insect, has done no less for man; and if his way is thorny, his days full of care, it is not she who is to be held accountable for it, but his own feeble will, which permits an outworn code of morals, evil laws, and the dead hand of custom to throttle his life. Thus Shelley reasons, philosophizing:

Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element: the block
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active, living spirit.[153]

In the spirit of man is engendered love and hate; these create evil and good, which in their train bring truth and falsehood, pain and pleasure. With man rests the choice between a life of triumphant virtue or trampled servitude.[154]

War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade; [155]

[150] The use of this word twice within twenty lines is an indication of some degree of carelessness.
[151] iv. 88–9.
[152] iv. 117–18.
[153] iv. 139–43.
[154] iv. 145–67.
[155] iv. 168–9.

and the military, which is the active agent of war, is made up, Shelley thinks, of

> . . . the dregs
> Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend
> Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,
> All that is mean and villainous, with rage,
> . . . they are decked in wealth,
> Honour and power, then are sent abroad
> To do their work.[156]

From this view of the soldier, earlier expressed in the *Declaration of Rights,* Shelley never retreats, declaring as late as 1820:

> He is more degraded than a murderer; he is like the bloody knife which has stabbed and feels not; a murderer we may abhor and despise; a soldier, is by profession, beyond abhorrence and below contempt.[157]

Shelley had not yet come into contact with the law courts, but his opinion of them at this time was unfavorable. He says:

> Those too the tyrant serve, who, skilled to snare
> The feet of Justice in the toils of law,
> Stand, ready to oppress the weaker still;
> And right or wrong will vindicate for gold.[158]

His motto from Voltaire [159] not being forgotten, he attacks the church whose Deity, as Shelley understood, proposed rewards for conduct which *should* be disinterestedly virtuous,

[156] iv. 181–4, 186–8.
[157] *Philosophical View of Reform.* 1820. p. 68.
[158] iv. 196–9.
[159] "Ecrasez l'infame," carried on the title-page of *Queen Mab.*

and punishment for acts which, in His omniscience and omnipotence, He might have foreseen and in mercy prevented. The church, as already the courts of law and the military establishment, has fallen under the control of an earthly tyrant who "tempers" it "to his work" and uses it to destroy those who dare to oppose him. The canto ends with an appeal to "priest, conqueror [and] prince" to repent ere it be too late.

With the initial lines of the next canto we first meet the image of leaves, so often and so successfully employed [160] by Shelley. This time the likeness of the production, from decayed leaves, of new things of beauty, to the birth, from the decay of vice, of "virtue," "delight," and "love," is wordy but tolerably well managed. Volney, inveighing against self-love, had shown how it was behind a host of evils from which man suffers; [161] how commerce [162] led to the expansion of boundary-lines, and how this led to war.[163] The desire for the accumulation of wealth at last becoming inordinate and general, prevailed over sympathy and the law of equality, and produced a new society consisting "of a small body of indolent rich, and a multitude of mercenary poor." [164] In such a state "The people, reduced to indigence, debased themselves; the great, cloyed with superfluity, became depraved." As "there was nothing to excite emulation or encourage instruction, the minds of men sunk into profound ignorance." The increasing demands for luxuries brought at last all commodities, all affection, all virtues and vices, to the market-place, to be sold for

[160] Cf., e. g., *Ode to West Wind.* 63–70.
[161] *Ruins of Empires.* pp. 23–7.
[162] *Ibid.* p. 23.
[163] *Ibid.* p. 38.
[164] *Ibid.* p. 39.

a price.[165] And "Since the evils of society flow from Ignorance and inordinate Desire, men will never cease to be tormented till they shall become intelligent and wise; till they shall practice the art of justice, founded on a knowledge of the various relations in which they stand, and the laws of their own organization." [166] All this Shelley versifies, promising at the end that if society will but turn toward such virtue,

> A brighter morn awaits the human day [167]

Anticipating in the sixth canto, the rejoicing which, when Prometheus weds Asia, rings down the corridors of the fourth act of *Prometheus Unbound,* he describes earth which will yet be a place

> Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
> When man, with changeless Nature coalescing,
> Will undertake regeneration's work.[168]

This vision of the future is succeeded by violent denunciations of Religion

> Who peoplest earth with demons, Hell with men,
> And Heaven with slaves! [169]

whose God is held to be the mere chimæra of man's disordered intellect, but withal a menacing delusion. Even here, however, Shelley recognized in the processes of Nature a moving Spirit widely-diffused and all-permeating, which he

[165] *Ruins of Empires.* p. 53.
[166] *Ibid.* p. 57.
[167] *Queen Mab.* v. 251; and cf. *Hellas.* 1066.
[168] vi. 41–3.
[169] vi. 70–1. Cf. Paine, *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays.* 1817. pp. 66, 70; and Godwin, *Political Justice.* 1798. i. 170–1.

identifies with the Godwinian Necessity.[170] "Oh, that this Deity were the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal, imperishable love!" Shelley had exclaimed to Hogg, two years before; and he had added, with some confidence: "Indeed I believe it is."[171] When in *Queen Mab* Shelley glorifies this same "Soul of the Universe," he does so in the manner of Volney. Compare:

Soul of the Universe! eternal spring
Of life and death, of happiness and woe,
Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
That floats before our eyes in wavering light,
Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison,
Whose chains and massy walls
We feel, but cannot see.
—*Queen Mab.* vi. 190–6.

Sovereign and mysterious Power of the Universe! secret Mover of Nature! Universal Soul of every thing that lives! infinite and incomprehensible Being, whom, under so many forms, mortals have ignorantly worshipped! God, who in the immensity of the heavens dost guide revolving worlds, and people the abyss of space with millions of suns.
—*Ruins of Empires,* p. 49.

Addressing this universal Spirit, Shelley says:

. . . all that the wide world contains
Are but thy passive instruments,[172]

a notion under which the image of the æolian lyre reappears again and again in his prose[173] and poetry.[174] In the *Essay*

[170] vi. 171–2, 198.
[171] Letter, Jan. 12, 1811. *Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* 1926. viii. 44.
[172] vi. 214–15.
[173] Cf., e.g., *Essay on Christianity,* in *Prose Works.* ii. 343–4, 349–50, 366–7; and *Defence of Poetry,* in *Ibid.* iii. 100–1.
[174] Cf., e.g., *Alastor,* 41–49, 667–8; *Laon and Cythna,* iv. 1549; *Prometheus Unbound* III. iii. 36–9; *Ode to the West Wind,* v. 1.

on Christianity written two years later, Shelley departs from his pantheistic conception, and openly calls this Spirit, God.[175]

Volney had given an account of the seizure, by Christian teachers, of a Jew who had questioned the validity of the Christian faith; and of a procession of monks which thereupon appeared "some in black, some in white, advancing with a standard on which *pincers, a gridiron,* and *a funeral pile,* and the words, *justice, charity,* and *mercy,* were painted"; and that these monks "exclaimed, 'It is proper to make an example of this impious heretic, and to burn him alive for the glory of God!' And already they had pictured to their imaginations the scene of the torture."[176] This perhaps gave Shelley his cue for an extended description of the fulfilment of that crime, with which description he opens the seventh canto of *Mab.* He changes the character of the victim from Jew to atheist; and this affords him an opportunity to assert in verse what he had hitherto given the world in the prose tract, *The Necessity of Atheism.* That tract, altered in some points, was then introduced into *Mab* as a note to the verse passage. Mab summons Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, to answer to the question: "Is there a God?" That "strange and woe-worn wight" who had already appeared in Shelley's poem, *The Wandering Jew* (1811) and elsewhere among his *Juvenilia,* now gives a satirical account of Creation, the Garden of Eden, the life of Christ, the doctrine of election, Christ's utterance: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"; and telling the story of the curse which Christ, on the way to Calvary, had visited upon him, the old Jew boasts:

[175] "There is a Power by which we are surrounded, like the atmosphere in which some motionless lyre is suspended.—This Power is God." *Essay on Christianity.*

[176] *Ruins of Empires.* pp. 108–9.

I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unweariable war
With my almighty Tyrant, and to hurl
Defiance at His impotence to harm
Beyond the curse I bore [177]

With the Fairy's promise to reveal the future, the eighth canto opens, and very early in this division of tne poem we find some of the images belonging to Shelley's symbolism. There is the metaphor, applied to the virtuous spirit, of a lighthouse. On Dec. 20, 1810, he had written to Hogg, concerning Timothy Shelley's anger at him for his metaphysical notions: "There lowers a terrific tempest, but I stand, as it were, on a pharos, and smile exultingly at the vain beating of the billow." [178] "Return, I entreat you," says Eusebes to Theosophus, "to that tower of strength which securely overlooks the chaos of the conflicting opinions of men.[179] Again, we meet, in *Laon and Cythna*, this:

. . . all mortal eyes were drawn,
As famished mariners through strange seas gone
Gaze on a burning watch-tower by the light
Of those divinest lineaments,[180]

and Laon is conducted by his captors to a column on a rock which had served during many ages to guide sailors homeward.[181] Another symbol, first introduced into *Mab*, was to

[177] vii. 196–201.
[178] *Letters*. i. 19.
[179] *Prose Works*. ii. 41.
[180] *Laon and Cythna*. V. xliv.
[181] *Ibid*. iii. 1207.

reappear later in *Laon and Cythna.*[182] Possibly from the book of *Isaiah* [183] Shelley drew the picture of

> . . . a babe before his mother's door,
> Sharing his morning's meal
> With the green and golden basilisk
> That comes to lick his feet; [184]

a picture elaborated in the same canto [185] to show how, once disinterested virtue supplants superstition, the earth will be animated by one sole impulse of love, will bring forth only "fruits . . . ever ripe" and "flowers ever fair." Man and beasts will live in harmony, neither fearing nor preying upon the other. The abandonment of a flesh diet, which is a consequence, means an end of all these ills to which by virtue of his former diet man was continually prone,

> . . . Man has lost
> His terrible prerogative, and stands
> An equal amidst equals; happiness
> And science dawn though late upon the earth.[186]

From this renovated earth, we learn, in canto ix, crime and falsehood, disease, marriage and prostitution, famine, penury, and false imprisonment shall disappear and liberty shall usurp the seat of their control.

> Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:
> Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
> Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,

[182] v. 2161–3.
[183] xi. 6, 8.
[184] *Queen Mab.* vii. 84–7.
[185] ll. 124–131.
[186] viii. 225–8.

Yet Spring's awakening breath will woo the earth.
. . . bravely hold thy course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change:
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal.[187]

In such passages, near the close of *Mab,* Shelley escapes from the fetters of dogmatism that bound him through most of the poem, and his feet no longer resting on this our common soil, he soars on the wings of melody never before heard in his verse. One means of this escape is through symbolism, which, because it offers the opportunity of conveying metaphysical meanings under the guise of descriptions of natural scenery, provides a beautiful medium by which not only the reason but also the senses are attracted.

One further example of this may be cited. In lines 99–102 Shelley describes the ruins of a palace, surmounted now by leaves

Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower
Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook
In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower
And whispered strange tales in the Whirlwind's ear.

The key to the interpretation of this is to be found in a letter from Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener, January 26, 1812, in which, referring to his plan to establish himself somewhere in the mountains of Wales, he says:

[187] *Queen Mab.* ix. 164–7; 146–54.

I shall try to domesticate in some antique feudal castle whose moldering turrets are fit emblems of decaying inequality and oppression, whilst the *ivy shall wave its green banners above like Liberty* and flourish upon the edifice that essayed to crush its root; [188]

and the "strange tales whispered in the Whirlwind's ear" are explained by reference to Shelley's earlier *Sonnet on Launching Some Bottles Filled with Knowledge into the Bristol Channel* wherein we read:

> And oh! if Liberty e'er deigned to stoop
> From yonder lowly throne her crownless brow,
> Sure she will breathe around your emerald group
> The fairest breezes of her West that blow.[189]

These two passages make clear that Shelley thus early was trying his hand in the use of those images by which Plato in olden time and Blake in Shelley's own day were accustomed to convey their philosophy to other men. At the close of nearly a century of criticism that had been utterly blind to this aspect of Shelley's genius, another mystic, Mr. W. B. Yeats, stated it as his belief that "one finds in his poetry, besides innumerable images that have not the definiteness of symbols, many images that are certainly symbols, and as the years went by he began to use these with a more and more deliberately symbolic purpose." [190] Mr. Yeats was followed in this point of view by Mr. Edward Thomas, another poet, who said of Shelley's use of "lawns among woods" that "if I say they are symbolic I shall explain nothing, but I may suggest something of the truth." [191] Both Mr. Yeats and Mr. Thomas have

[188] *Letters.* i. 234–5. The italics are my own.
[189] ll. 5–8.
[190] *Ideas of Good and Evil.* 3rd ed., 1907. p. 112.
[191] *Feminine Influence on the Poets.* 1910. p. 41.

given, in support of their conclusions, several examples of this symbolism of Shelley's selected from his prose and verse. In the present study, I have already called attention to other imagery, such as leaves, the æolian lyre, the child and the serpent, and the lighthouse, early introduced and long after employed by Shelley.

In *Queen Mab* we encounter a great many conceptions later to be reproduced with little change in the poems of his matured genius. Compare, for example:

The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements
—*Queen Mab.* vi. 83–4.

Oh, there are spirits of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze
—To— (*Poems of 1816*) 1–2.

. . . the Incarnate came; humbly he came,
Veiling His horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorned by the world, His name unheard,
Save by the rabble of His native town,
Even as a parish demagogue.
—*Ibid.* vii. 163–7.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror, came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame
—*Hellas.* 211–14.

. . . Prostitution's venomed bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and life;
—*Queen Mab.* ix. 87–8.

. . . Woman as the bond-slave dwells
Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells.
—*Laon and Cythna.* vii. 3315.

Woman and man, in confidence and love,
Equal and free and pure together trod

. . . the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
Who travel . . .

The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.
—*Ibid.* ix. 89–92.

By the broad highway of the world . . .
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe
—*Epipsychidion.* 154–8.

Life is . . . the store
Of all events . . .
That *variegate the eternal universe* [192]
—*Ibid.* ix. 158–60.

Life, like a dome of *many-coloured* glass,
Stains the white radiance of *Eternity.*[192]
—*Adonais,* 462–3.

Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet Spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower,
—*Ibid.* ix. 166–8.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear
From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews
Which feed Spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,
Frozen by doubt . . .[193]
—*Laon and Cythna,* xii. 4567.

"If," says Professor Saintsbury, "I had had to review *Queen Mab* in 1813 I should have said that it contained a good deal of nonsense, some of it mischievous, but that the author was pretty certainly a poet, and most certainly no small master of prosody already." [194] Mr. Shaw many years ago declared the poem to be "a work far superior to *The Cenci,*" which he considered antiquated. "*Queen Mab,*" he said, was "a perfectly original poem on a great subject. Throughout the

[192] The italics are my own.

[193] Note the recurrence here also of the idea involved in the early poems concerning *An Icicle That Clung to the Grass of a Grave.* See p. 81 of the present study.

[194] *History of English Prosody.* iii. 104.

whole poem Shelley showed a remarkable grasp of facts, anticipating also the modern view that sociological problems are being slowly worked out independently of the conscious interference of man." [195] On the other hand, a fundamental flaw in the philosophy of the poem is discovered by Professor Gingerich, who says: "It seems in dealing with the principle of Necessity in *Queen Mab* Shelley was not fully aware that he was handling a two-edged sword. For why should kings and priests and Christians be held responsible for their terrible deeds when, according to the theory of Necessity, they were irresistibly impelled to act precisely as they did act? This . . . is the fundamental contradiction of the poem." [196]

The only review of the original edition of *Queen Mab* which has yet been discovered is that which appeared, two years after the publication of the poem, in an American journal, *The Theological Inquirer, or Polemical Magazine* conducted by Erasmus Perkins. Although it has been asserted by a great collector of Shelleyana that this publication "contains writings by Shelley unknown to any of his editors" [197] no proof of the statement is forthcoming. The review of *Mab* is distinctly favorable.[198] Shelley himself was reticent as to his success or failure in the poem; but save in the growth of a kindlier attitude toward the Christ, which was characteristic of his writings from 1815 on, and is well illustrated by the parallel passages just cited, in *Mab* and *Hellas,* his philosophical attitude

[195] *Notebook of the Shelley Society.* 1888. p. 31.

[196] *Shelley's Doctrine of Necessity vs. Christianity* in *Publications of the Modern Language Association.* xxxii. 450–1.

[197] The statement is by C. W. Frederickson, the distinguished Brooklyn collector, as a note in a volume of this magazine (from March to September, 1815) sold as item 1740 of the *Sale of the Library of C. W. Frederickson,* 1897.

[198] It was partially reprinted in the first American edition (1821) of *Queen Mab.*

differed only slightly in later years from that taken in this first major poem.

But if the poem, being privately printed and circulated by the author only among his friends and acquaintances, started few ripples on the waters of criticism, Shelley was less fortunate when knowledge of it reached England's courts of law. This, however, belongs to a later chapter of his life as does also the recension of the poem, known as *The Dœmon of the World,* partly published in 1816, and the pirated edition of *Mab* which in 1821 reaching a wider audience divided the readers of English poetry into two distinct camps: the lovers and the haters of Shelley. Everything that he had said of the malevolence that slumbers in government and church awoke it from that slumber at length and set both upon the poet and his publishers.

CHAPTER IX

EDINBURGH: BRACKNELL: LONDON

Friendship with the Boinvilles—Infatuation with Mary Godwin—Desertion of Harriet—Travel in Switzerland, Germany and Holland.

WHEN the Shelleys and Peacock reached Edinburgh, about the middle of October 1813, I think it possible that they proceeded first to the address where bride and groom had lodged in 1811; but, failing to find suitable rooms with their old landlord, they then went around the corner of George Street to 36 Frederick Street, where an Alexander Laing [1] provided them with lodgings. They had come to Edinburgh to gain peace of mind in remoteness from Shelley's numerous creditors. "We think of remaining here all this winter," Harriet wrote Mrs. Nugent; and she praised Edinburgh by saying: "This City is, I think, much the best. The people here are not so intolerant as they are in London. Literature stands on a higher footing here than anywhere else." [2]

As if in proof of Harriet's statement, there came to them a young Brazilian student named Baptista,[3] who, encountering *Queen Mab*, which had just been published, was so moved by it that he determined to translate it into Portuguese. To this end he formed an acquaintanceship with Shelley; and even after Shelley withdrew from the city, the two kept in touch with each other through letters. Later, they met again in

[1] *Post Office Directory* for 1812–13, p. 140; 1813–14, p. 144.

[2] *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* 1889. p. 50.

[3] ?A. B. Periera. Shelley addressed a letter to a Mr. Periera in 1815; and it is possible that his middle name was Baptista.

London. But the translation begun with so much fervor of admiration was never finished; for Baptista was stricken with lung-disease, and died.

Something—the bracing air, perhaps, of Edinburgh—seems to have spurred Shelley, on both visits, to almost incessant reading. Hogg relates how Shelley in 1811 brought "lots of good books" [4] to their lodgings in George Street—books borrowed, Hogg believed, from a public library, for Shelley carried them away again as soon as they were read, and returned with other volumes. Two years later, Shelley wrote to Hogg, from Edinburgh: "I have for some time given myself to study;" and he then enumerated, among the authors he had recently read, Plutarch and Homer, Tacitus and Cicero, Laplace and Hume. Of Plutarch's two essays, *On Sarcophagi*, he says: "I intend to comment upon them, and to reason in my preface concerning the Orphic and Pythagoric system of diet." [5] From this sentence we know that the *Refutation of Deism* was projected, and perhaps in part written, while Shelley was on the second visit to Edinburgh.

"A little more than two years has passed since I made my first visit here to be united with Mr. Shelley. To me they have been the happiest and longest years of my life." [6] So wrote Harriet to Mrs. Nugent on the 20th October. Yet, Jane, Lady Shelley, has recorded that "Towards the close of 1813, estrangements, which for some time had been slowly growing between Mr. and Mrs. Shelley, came to a crisis." [7] Did the rift in the lute make its appearance while they were in Edinburgh? Certainly Harriet's declarations just quoted are

[4] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 454.
[5] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 482.
[6] *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent*. p. 49.
[7] *Shelley Memorials*. 1859. pp. 64–5.

against the supposition that dissensions had arisen before 20th October; and a letter postmarked 23rd November, to the same correspondent [8] furnishes no hint of unhappiness. From this meagre but tangible evidence, it seems probable that prior to the return to London, which now became imperative because of the illness of Timothy Shelley, there had been no serious break between Shelley and Harriet; and that it was the fate of Edinburgh, from first to last, to bound the full cycle of their happiness.

Probably in the private carriage that conveyed them northward, and which John Dumbreck, the Edinburgh coachmaker, in the meantime had repaired, the Shelleys proceeded to London. They arrived in the metropolis on or before December 7th. After a short stay in London, during which he seems to have aided Godwin in one of that impecunious gentleman's hours of need,[9] he took a furnished house at Windsor, "at no great distance from the Boinvilles." Thus the plan announced to Hogg from Edinburgh—

> I shall return to London alone. My evenings will often be spent at the N[ewton]'s, where, I presume, you are no infrequent visitor

—thus, I say, the plan worked out. He did not meet Mrs. Boinville (sister to Mrs. Newton) and her charming daughter Cornelia at a half-way house—the Newton establishment in Chester Street. He went straight to Bracknell for those visits. But he did not come down from Edinburgh for the purpose *all alone*. Perhaps Harriet and Eliza did not favor the idea. Eliza, who had been left behind once before, at Killarney, was probably not anxious to be left again; and Shelley could not at first shake them both off that he might have uninterrupted ac-

[8] *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* pp. 51–3.
[9] Godwin, *Diary,* November 12: "Shelley, deed, etc."

cess to society which by this time seemed more congenial to him than that of

His cold fireside and alienated home.[10]

Thwarted at first, in February 1814 he took matters into his own hands and went to live with the Boinvilles. From their home he wrote joyfully, on March 16th, to Hogg:

I have been staying with Mrs. B[oinville] for the last month; I have escaped, in the society of all that philosophy and friendship combine, from the dismaying solitude of myself. They have revived in my heart the expiring flame of life. I have felt myself translated to a paradise, which has nothing of mortality, but its transitoriness; my heart sickens at the view of that necessity, which will quickly divide me from the delightful tranquillity of this happy home—*for it has become my home.* The trees, the bridge, the minutest objects, have already a place in my affections.[11]

"The trees, the bridge, the minutest objects" says Shelley, cataloguing the attractions of Bracknell. He did not mention in this list the hope of seeing "the aged Zonoras" (i. e. Dr. Lind) though Professor Dowden has suggested that Shelley might have taken up his residence at Windsor to be near the aged tutor of his Eton days. He did not mention Cornelia Turner, either, who would perhaps have felt slighted if she had looked over his shoulder as he wrote to Hogg. But further on in the letter we are granted more light:

I have begun to learn Italian again. I am reading Beccaria, "Dei delitti e pene." . . . Cornelia assists me in this language. Did I not once tell you that I thought her cold and reserved? She is the

[10] *Alastor.* 76.
[11] i. 417–18. The italics are my own.

reverse of this, as she is the reverse of everything bad. She inherits all the divinity of her mother.[12]

If we needed more evidence than this gives concerning his thoughts at this time, the verses which he includes in the same message to Hogg, and which could scarcely have been addressed to any other person than Cornelia Turner, supply the needful addition:

> Thy dewy looks sink in my breast;
> Thy gentle words stir poison there;
> Thou hast disturbed the only rest
> That was the portion of despair!
> Subdued to Duty's hard control,
> I could have borne my wayward lot;
> The chains that bind this ruined soul
> Had cankered then—but crushed it not.

Translated into prose with the key of Shelley's other poetry before us, what does this mean? What was "Duty's hard control" if not that duty which in the eyes of society he owed to her he had married, albeit by a ceremony of doubtful legality, in Edinburgh in 1811? A reference to *Queen Mab*, ix. 201, shows us a phrase "cold control" there applied to marriage, and necessarily related to this duty which by virtue of marriage, society would insist that he owed to Harriet Shelley. "The chains that bind the ruined soul"—what were they? What, if not those of the lines in *Epipsychidion* which bind "those poor slaves"

> Who travel to their home among the dead
> By the broad highway of the world, . . .
> With *one chained friend* [13]

[12] *Letters*. i. 419–20.
[13] ll. 156–8.

chained, that is, *together* by the laws of civil society respecting marriage? These he had held up to scorn in his letters to Hogg from Field Place in 1810–11; had mocked in *St. Irvyne;* had succumbed to under a protest registered in his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, 8 October 1811; had as we have just seen, pilloried in *Queen Mab;* and attacked as late as 1821 completely and finally in the passage, with which the lines above cited are connected, in which he confesses:

> I never was attached to that great sect,
> Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
> Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
> And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
> To cold oblivion. . . .[14]

And probably, if Harriet Shelley in those momentous days of Shelley's Italian classes at Boinville seminary, had asked him how he could thus sequester himself from her, he would have argued that Cornelia was but the "sister of his soul" as once Elizabeth Hitchener had been; that

> True love in this differs from gold and clay,
> That to divide is not to take away.[15]

Perhaps he would have made Harriet feel her lack of mental breadth by putting into angry prose some such sentiment as

> . . . Narrow
> The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
> The life that wears, the spirit that creates
> One object, and one form, and builds thereby
> A Sepulchre for its eternity.[16]

[14] *Epipsychidion.* ll. 149–153.
[15] *Ibid.* 160–1.
[16] *Ibid.* 167–173.

But lest it be argued that all this is but one side of the story, let us see whether there were any manly reasons why Shelley did not find, in his own home, the sympathy and solace his nature craved and demanded. The various points urged against Harriet and her sister were:

1. That Harriet had insisted upon Shelley's buying a carriage in 1813 when he could ill afford one on the basis of his income.[17]

2. That after the birth of Ianthe, Harriet lost interest in and finally abandoned her studies.[18]

3. That Harriet's walks with Hogg "commonly" led "to some fashionable bonnet-shop." [19]

4. That on the occasion of an operation which had to be performed upon Ianthe, "Harriet stood by, narrowly observing all that was done, but, to the astonishment of the operator, betraying not the smallest sign of emotion." [20]

5. That Harriet had proved unfaithful to her husband in March 1814.[21]

6. That Eliza Westbrook persisted in remaining as a member of the Shelley household in the face of Shelley's "unbounded abhorrence for this miserable wretch." [22]

As to the first charge, let us see how Shelley, about the time of the purchase of the carriage, was hoarding his money. In order to do this it will first be necessary to go into the finan-

[17] Hogg, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* ii. 358; Hogg's sarcastic reference to "the good Harriet's fine, new carriage" furnished Dowden with a hint which he elaborates into a charge. *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* 1886. i. 403.

[18] Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* ii. 500.

[19] *Ibid.* ii. 501.

[20] *Ibid.* ii. 509.

[21] Letter of Shelley to Mary, Jan. 11, 1817. *Letters* ii. 538; and letter of Godwin to Baxter, May 12, 1817. *Boston Evening Transcript* (c. Jan. 15, 1918).

[22] Letter of Shelley to Hogg, from Bracknell, March 16, 1814. *Letters* ii. 419.

cial situation of Shelley's friend, the admired philosopher, William Godwin. From letters now in the British Museum we have seen that as early as November 29, 1812, Godwin promised his creditor, Francis Place, that if in the August next succeeding he should be unable to extricate himself from his financial difficulties, he would "deliberate maturely and either give up" his "concern altogether, or firmly call on" his "young friend to assist" him, "to the extent, whatever it is, that shall render his assistance effectual." [23] Note at this point, Godwin's certainty, within a month of his first meeting with Shelley that he could be relied upon to furnish him with funds in *whatever amounts* his pressing needs should require. In a letter to Mrs. William Taylor of Norwich, December 10, 1814, Mrs. Godwin referred to the fact that three of Godwin's creditors, Mr. Place, Mr. Lambert, and "a third Person" had "for the last two years" "renewed their acceptances" of Godwin's notes on Shelley's giving security, probably in the form of post-obit bonds on the Shelley estates in Sussex; that Place and Lambert accepted such bonds; and that after a time Taylor did also for £300 owing to him from Godwin.[24]

This clearly indicates that as early as the winter of 1812–13, Shelley began to underwrite Godwin's indebtedness; and we know that by the winter of 1814–15 he had raised either £2000 [25] or £3000 [26] for his friend's relief. Now Shelley was in no wise obliged, save by the creed of Godwin's own *En-*

[23] *Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS.* 35, 145, ff. 37a, 37b.

[24] *Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS.* 35, 145, ff. 67a, 67b, 68a.

[25] *Diary of Dr. John William Polidori.* 1911. p. 113.

[26] Letter of Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent, Nov. 20, 1814. *Letters of Harriet Shelley*, etc. p. 57. In a letter to a Mr. Teasdale, May 6, 1814, Shelley admits that on one occasion previous to that date he had raised £500 by the sale of a post-obit. This may have been the first sale of such bonds for Godwin's benefit. Ingpen, *Shelley in England.* 413–14.

quiry into Political Justice, thus to subsidize a man whom he had known but thirty days, a man who had no claims of relationship upon him as Harriet *had*, a man who from 1804 to 1814 had been obliged to call upon his friends and acquaintances annually for sums totalling, each year, "upwards of £400," [27] a man whose hopeless bankruptcy was even then apparent to his friends [28] and became the established fact when in the autumn of 1822, after the death of the beneficent Shelley, he was "turned out of his house and business in Skinner Street" and faced the seizure of all his property by his creditors.[29]

"If Shelley can thus barter away his expectations for a comparative stranger," Harriet might well have mused, "may I not reasonably demand some of the comforts of life?" Let it be remembered that the Field Place Shelleys had never taken Harriet to their bosom as the wife of Bysshe. Let it be remembered that her existence as the wife of this uncertain waif of impulse had been from the first a feverish and unsettled one; that she had never been permitted to remain long enough in any spot to surround herself with some of the atmosphere and luxury of a home; that she had indeed never had the means to do this; that Shelley's aversion to raising money on his expectations had persisted until Godwin convinced him that he should offer post-obit bonds to the weary creditors of the bookselling enterprise in Skinner Street; that Shelley's objection had then disappeared, and he had pledged the sum of perhaps £9000 (for the money-lenders demanded a 3-for-1

[27] *Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS.* 35, 145, ff. 30–36.

[28] Letter of Place to Godwin, Nov. 28, 1812. *Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS.* 35, 145, ff. 43b, 44a.

[29] Letter of Charles Lamb to B. R. Haydon, 9 October 1822. *Correspondence and Table Talk of B. R. Haydon.* i. 355.

rate in their dealings with Shelley) [30] to secure Godwin from annoyance. *Was* it unreasonable that Harriet, knowing this, should have asked Shelley to provide somewhat for *her* comfort and *her* pleasure? The coach cost only one-eighteenth of the sum pledged for Godwin.[31] But Shelley did not desert *Godwin* because of the latter's demands upon him. How, then, are we to justify him for deserting *Harriet* on this account, and then boasting ultimately, after he had travelled in that carriage over half of Europe with another woman, that it was built "by one of the best makers in Bond Street?" [32]

Next comes the charge that Harriet had lost interest in her studies after the birth of Ianthe. Ianthe had been born at the end of June 1813. We have already seen that Shelley began to be on intimate terms with the Boinvilles about July 11, that year. If Shelley, who formerly had been at her side to encourage her studies and aid her in them, had found the late hours, long conversations, and Italian with Cornelia Turner more attractive than the company of his wife, is Harriet to be blamed if study now palled on her taste? Did she sometimes imagine Shelley and Cornelia in the situation which Peacock, who visited Shelley at Bracknell, described in *Nightmare Abbey*—bearing in mind, reader, that Scythrop, in Peacock's novel, is his caricature of the Shelley of this period—?

Marionetta.—Shall I teach you a compendious method of courtship, that will give you no trouble whatever?

[30] Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS. 35, 145, ff. 67a & b, 68a; and *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 102.

[31] Ingpen, *Shelley in England,* Appendix III, shows that in 1823 the London coachmaker, Thomas Charters, who had built the coach, was still vainly trying to collect his account from Shelley's executor.

[32] *Letters.* ii. 759. To this last piece of inconsistency Mark Twain has called attention.

The Honourable Mr. Listless.—You will confer on me an inexpressible obligation. I am all impatience to learn it.

Marionetta.—Sit with your back to the lady and read Dante; only be sure to begin in the middle, and turn over three or four pages at once—backwards as well as forwards, and she will immediately perceive that you are desperately in love with her—desperately.

(The Honourable Mr. Listless, sitting between Scythrop and Marionetta, and fixing all his attention on the beautiful speaker, did not observe *Scythrop*, who *was doing as she described.*) [33]

If Harriet was endowed with imagination enough to picture that scene, would it have been surprising that she might suddenly have acquired an intense dislike for studies that were interesting to Shelley only when conducted with women to whom he was not "chained" by marriage? Thinking this, she well might have exclaimed, with Mr. Flosky, in that novel:

Tea, late dinners, and the French Revolution,[34] have played the devil, Mr. Listless, and brought the devil into play.[35]

The charge, made by Hogg, that Harriet about this time became interested—too much interested—in buying hats, is, I think, too childish to be entertained as a serious charge. If it is so entertained anywhere the reasons already adduced why the demand for the carriage was less unreasonable than has been supposed, will apply with equal force here. One wonders as to the fourth charge, whether Shelley would have preferred a pyrotechnical display of nerves to Harriet's calm endurance of the sight of Ianthe's suffering? She who could think in her

[33] *Nightmare Abbey.* 1818. pp. 70–1. The italics are my own.

[34] Against the tea-drinking, irregular meals, and French Revolutionary philosophy characterizing the life of the Boinville circle, Hogg has also protested in his *Life of Shelley.*

[35] *Nightmare Abbey.* 1818. p. 72.

last hour chiefly of her children was not, assuredly, a mother lacking in emotional tenderness or devotion.[36]

The fifth charge is a major one, of course; and involves several important considerations.

1. Was it true of Harriet in March 1814? The answer is that Godwin in January 1817 charged that it was, but did not wish to be *quoted* as charging it. Such a charge was not, apparently, used in any way in connection with the Chancery Suit over the children in 1817. Shelley, and his apologists since, have often reiterated that if the facts were known, his record of desertion certainly would be cleared. But one hundred years after the death of the poet such proofs are still lacking, and no more substantial evidence than Godwin's apologetic attack is forthcoming.

2. Did Shelley *think* that Harriet had been unfaithful as he was drifting away from her in 1814? There is no evidence that this was the case.

3. If Harriet had been guilty of such a crime in March 1814, the fact would still remain that at that time Shelley had been living away from his wife for a month. If Harriet had been charged with unfaithfulness to her marriage bond, is it to be forgotten that thirty days earlier Shelley had left her society for the company of other women?

4. If Harriet then or thereafter *was* unfaithful to her marriage bond, which still held in law until her suicide in 1816, is anything else established than that a simple honest girl, who by all accounts was as good as she was fair, first eloped, then married, and afterwards lived with and bore children to a man who corrupted her morals with Godwinian poison and afterwards deserting her, set her adrift to follow his own teachings

[36] See her letter to her sister, on the eve of her suicide in 1816. Pub. *Cornhill Magazine*. Jan. 1922.

and his own example in an evil world? Certainly, there can be no exoneration for *him* in any act of *hers*.

Finally, to deal with the sixth charge, that Eliza Westbrook remained a member of the Shelley household *after* her welcome, so far as Shelley was concerned, was worn out, it must be admitted that this was with Shelley a sore point, and that he expressed himself strongly to Hogg [37] and Peacock [38] on this subject. Probably Eliza, by being dictatorial in the home,[39] and perhaps also by criticising Shelley for his vagaries—though on the latter point we claim no evidence—antagonized the poet, who never brooked interference with his own passionate desires, his sudden impulses that were for him a law unto themselves. Eliza should no doubt have withdrawn from the Shelley household earlier, leaving Shelley and Harriet to continue their existence in such harmony as yet brooded over them. On the other hand, Eliza may have felt not a little anxiety for her sister as the months rolled by and she saw Shelley running off elsewhere for the solace of companionship. Eliza Westbrook was perhaps the spark that set the magazine ablaze; but that is not to say that the blaze must not have come between Harriet and the lovable and well-intentioned, but sadly misguided and undisciplined will-o'-the-wisp whom she had married with such precipitancy in the autumn of 1811.

Leaving Shelley for a little while in the midst of his teas, late dinners, and Italian lessons, we are now obliged to note the appearance in the early part of 1814 of his next publication. This, a hundred-page pamphlet, printed by Schulze

[37] Letter, March 16, 1814. *Letters.* i. 419.

[38] *Works of T. L. Peacock,* 1875. iii. 418.

[39] Hogg's stories about her supervision of Harriet's health, and the warning of "Miss Warne" are funny enough, but perhaps colored by Hogg's irresistible impulse to get the utmost humor out of any situation.

and Dean, of 13 Poland Street, London, was entitled *A Refutation of Deism: in a Dialogue*, and was an essay which reiterated (1) arguments, and whole passages, from the notes of *Queen Mab*, one of which, on atheism, was itself a recension of *The Necessity of Atheism*, and (2) some of the theses advanced in *A Letter to Lord Ellenborough*, with the declared purpose of showing that there is no tenable middle ground between atheism and Christianity. In this, Shelley, with some subtle skill endeavors to prove the absurdity of faith, of revealed religion, of the conception of an anthropomorphic Deity, of the dogma declaring the creator of the Universe a God of "Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Infinity, Immutability, Incomprehensibility, and Immateriality." There is a brief excursion into the subject of vegetarianism; but here Shelley depends less upon his earlier published arguments than he does in the rest of the essay. The whole is conducted as a dialogue between Eusebes, who pretends to act as an apologist for Christianity, but actually sets forward, whenever possible, such arguments in defence of it as constitute in reality arguments *against*, and not *for* this faith; and Theosophus, who at first defending deism, at length is obliged by Eusebes to choose between atheism and Christianity and professes that in such a dilemma he would be "willing to promise that if, after mature deliberation, the arguments which [Eusebes] advanced in favour of Atheism should appear incontrovertible, [he would] endeavour to adopt so much of the Christian scheme as is consistent with [his] persuasions of the goodness, unity, and majesty of God." [40]

An example of Shelley's sly method of attacking Christianity while seeming to uphold it, is afforded by the very first speech of Eusebes, in which that dialectician is made to say:

[40] *Prose Works.* iii. 80.

The morality of the Christian religion is as original and sublime, as its miracles and mysteries are unlike all other portents. A patient acquiescence in injuries and violence; a passive submission to the will of sovereigns; a disregard of those ties by which the feelings of humanity have ever been bound to this unimportant world; humility and faith, are doctrines neither similar nor comparable to those of any other system. Friendship, patriotism, and magnanimity; the heart that is quick in sensibility, the hand that is inflexible in execution; genius, learning, and courage, are qualities which have engaged the admiration of mankind, but which we are taught by Christianity to consider as splendid and delusive vices.[41]

From this Shelley proceeds to strike at the persecutions by Christians of infidels; [42] at faith [43]—this in a most subtile manner;—at the unreasonableness of maintaining that belief is a matter of merit or demerit; [44] at the irrational Biblical account of the Creation, the Temptation of Adam, and of God's purpose in sending His Son into the world,—and here Theosophus argues that this God is the author of evil as well as good;— [45] at passages in the Scriptures retailing "obscenity" and "filth"; [46] at the inclosing of God in the Ark of the Covenant; [47] at belief in the account of a beneficent Deity's commanding Moses to slay the peoples living in lands He had decreed the Jews should occupy; [48] at the delay of God's revelation of Himself in the Christ, which meant that previous generations which He might have thus enlightened re-

[41] *Ibid.* ii. 38.
[42] *Ibid.* ii. 40.
[43] *Ibid.* ii. 41.
[44] *Ibid.* ii. 42.
[45] *Ibid.* ii. 44.
[46] *Ibid.* ii. 45. Shelley cites *Hosea,* chs. i, ix, and *Ezekiel,* iv, xvi, xxiii.
[47] *Ibid.* ii. 46.
[48] *Ibid.* ii. 46.

mained in ignorance for which He was responsible; [49] at the alleged inconsistency of the doctrines of man's taint from Adam's sin, and Christ's teaching of the forgiveness of sins; [50] at the recommendation of abstention from the sexual relation; [51] at the attempts made to fortify the authenticity of the faith by miracles,[52] and prophecies.[53]

In reply Eusebes admits "the difficulty of solving . . . general objections to Christianity, on the grounds of human reason," admits that the Almighty might, perhaps, "have afforded a more conspicuous or universal manifestation of his will"; [54] might eliminate such curses as poison, earthquakes, disease, war, famine, venomous serpents, slavery, and persecution, from the world; but asks: "Will [the Theist] place his God between the horns of a logical dilemma which shall restrict the fulness either of his power or his bounty?" He promises Theosophus to show him that "reason conducts to conclusions destructive of morality, happiness, and the hope of futurity, and inconsistent with the very existence of human society." [55] This is not accomplished in the dialogue.

Faced with the alternative, proposed by Eusebes, of a choice between Atheism and Christianity, Theosophus says: "I do not hesitate to prefer the Christian system, or indeed any system of religion, however rude and gross, to Atheism." [56] This statement, we shall see, he at the end of the dialogue considerably modifies. But even in the moment that he is

[49] *Ibid.* ii. 48.
[50] *Ibid.* ii. 48–9.
[51] *Ibid.* ii. 51. Shelley cites *I. Cor.* vii.
[52] *Ibid.* ii. 53–4.
[53] *Ibid.* ii. 54.
[54] *Ibid.* ii. 57.
[55] *Ibid.* ii. 58–9.
[56] *Ibid.* ii. 59.

calling the Atheist "a monster among men" he is making it clear that he only seems a monster because "Inducements, which are Omnipotent over the conduct of others, are impotent for him. His private judgment is his criterion of right and wrong. He dreads no judge but his own conscience, he fears no hell but the loss of his self-esteem.[57] He is not to be restrained by punishments, for death is divested of its terror, and whatever enters into his heart, to conceive, that will he not scruple to execute." Theosophus cannot "enjoy the spectacle of this beautiful Universe and not feel himself instinctively persuaded to gratitude, and adoration" of the "intelligence" that had designed it. He defends his faith in the existence of a deity on the grounds of the order and motion that are characteristic of the parts of the Universe.[58]

To this Eusebes objects that the series of creators must become infinite as we reason backward, arguing that anything existing must have been created. By whom was the Universe created? By the Creator? And who created Him? We may instead argue that matter, that the universe, have existed from all eternity,[59] and that "The laws of motion and properties of matter suffice to account for every phenomenon, or every combination of phenomena exhibited in the Universe." [60] Man, by the science of comparative anatomy, is shown to belong to "those animals who feed on fruits and vegetables," and if he indulges in an unnatural, flesh diet, he is only contravening those laws as a result of observing which he might prolong his life and avoid misery on earth.[61] If order argues the existence of "a benevolent power," disorder in life argues

[57] Cf. *Adonais*, 278–9, for the fulfilment of this in Shelley's experience.
[58] *Prose Works*. ii. 62.
[59] *Ibid*. ii. 65.
[60] *Ibid*. ii. 69.
[61] *Ibid*. ii. 70.

the existence of "a malevolent principle" (manichæism);[62] and as neither exists in an absolute state in life, is always to some extent interwoven with the other, and may exist in one phenomenon which works good for one and evil for another, it is "manifest that we cannot reason with respect to the universal system from that which only exists in relation to our own perceptions." As Shelley had objected to Southey's attaching the act of "faith" to the "divine Kailyal," so now Eusebes, calling faith "credulity," asserts that man has created anthropomorphic deities out of his own character wherein good and evil are mixed, or out of a negation of the laws governing "organized beings."[63] There is yet no universally accepted idea of God;[64] his existence cannot be argued from the existence of the universe;[65] and since nothing can be both cause and effect the power in existing substance cannot have been created by Power.[66] If Intelligence, which we cannot divorce, in our thinking, from organized bodies capable of sensation and reflection, be considered to be attached to Deity, God becomes "a vast and wise animal,"[67] a magnified image of ourselves. Since mind, according to Berkeley, "cannot create" but "can only perceive," it cannot be viewed as causing motion, of which it is rather the percipient effect than the animating cause.[68] It is impossible to divorce an infinite God from his creation;[69]

[62] *Ibid.* ii. 71. The idea is represented by the eagle and serpent in *Laon and Cythna,* and plays an important part in Byron's drama of *Cain.* It also enters Shelley's *Essay on Christianity* (*Prose Works* ii. 349), *On the Devil and Devils* (Pr. Works, ii. 383) and *Prometheus Unbound,* i. 126–8.

[63] *Ibid.* ii. 75.

[64] *Ibid.* ii. 76.

[65] *Ibid.* ii. 76.

[66] *Ibid.* ii. 76–7.

[67] *Ibid.* ii. 77.

[68] *Ibid.* ii. 77–8.

[69] *Ibid.* ii. 78.

"In the language of reason the words God and Universe are synonymous."[70] Eusebes then pretends to be unsympathetic with those Christians who have attempted "to prove the existence of God by the unassisted light of reason." And he "confesses" that "the necessity of revelation" has been vilely attacked by traitorous Christians who believed "that the sublime mysteries of the being of a God and the immortality of the soul are discoverable from other sources than itself." Sardonically he then concludes that

> The Christian Religion . . . affords indisputable assurance that the world was created by the power, and is preserved by the Providence of an Almighty God, who, in justice has appointed a future life for the punishment of the vicious and the remuneration of the virtuous.[71]

Shelley rests his case, with the same juvenile self-confidence that had prompted him, two years before, to append "Q.E.D." to his *Necessity of Atheism:*

> I have proved that on the principles of that philosophy to which Epicurus, Lord Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Hume were addicted, the existence of a God is a chimera.[72]

Deism might be "refuted" but the axiom that one cannot live without paying his bills was not so easy to refute; and Shelley was now hard pressed for the bare means of subsistence. Old Sir Bysshe Shelley must have had a kindly feeling toward his grandson, despite all the latter's waywardness. Indeed one is often impelled to say that the poet was more akin to his grandfather than he was to his father. Had not Sir Bysshe, when a young man, made one runaway match, and

[70] *Ibid.* ii. 78.
[71] *Ibid.* ii. 79.
[72] *Ibid.* ii. 79.

(it is said) after the death of his first wife, eloped with a second heiress? And had he not built Castle Goring only to find that it did not suit him, and then gone to live meanly, with one man-servant, in Arun House, "a small place near the town-hall at Horsham overlooking the river Arun?" [73] At any rate, when Shelley appealed through his father to his grandfather, on March 13th, 1814, for assistance, he said he knew his grandfather "must perceive that his hopes of preserving and perpetuating the integrity of the estate" would "be frustrated by neglecting to relieve" his grandson's necessities. He expressed himself as unwilling to resort to the sale of post-obit bonds, but said he would be obliged to take this step if relief were not soon afforded.[74]

Sir Bysshe seems to have proposed the sale of his "folly," Castle Goring, as a means of raising funds; but Timothy, shocked at the proposal and not sympathizing with his son, was sure that "any offer of doing so w [oul] d be nutts for the unchristian and unfeeling-like spirit." [75] On March 4th Shelley had effected the sale of a post-obit bond. The reversion of £8000 sterling was sold on that date to Messrs. Andrew John Nash and George Augustus Nash of Cornhill, for £2593.10s.[76]

Probably in the course of some of these financial negotiations Shelley discovered how extremely important it would be for his children that the validity of his marriage with Harriet should be above question. Whatever the reason was, it was probably not that he would have wished by any ceremony to bind himself closer to his

one chained friend

[73] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. p. 17.
[74] *Letters*. i. 416–17.
[75] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. p. 412.
[76] *Ibid*. p. 413.

From an 18th century print

S^t. George's, *Hanover Square.*

Where Shelley and Harriet were remarried in 1814.

from whom he had been drifting since the latter part of the preceding year. On March 22nd he went with Godwin to Doctors' Commons and secured a License and two days later was remarried to Harriet at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, the curate's name being, oddly enough, Edward Williams.[77]

By April 18,[78] Eliza Westbrook had taken, too tardily, her departure from the Shelley household. It was said she had gone to Southampton. And Harriet had left Bracknell for London, but with no known intention of staying there, apart from Shelley, for any long time. In this month Shelley composed the well-known *Stanzas: April 1814* which, beginning vigorously, rise suddenly after a second and third stanza of mediocre quality, to two stanzas of rare beauty and striking rhythm; and end on a stanza more sincere than beautiful, but informed with poignant personal sadness. The verses were undoubtedly composed as Shelley with deep regret anticipated the coming of the day which would demand that he return to Harriet, to his "sad and silent home," to its "desolated hearth." *Stanzas: April 1814* is Shelley's first lyric of distinction. Within two years it was to be followed by others: *Mutability*, *On Death*, (especially worthy of note) *A Summer Evening Churchyard*, "Oh, there are spirits of the air," and other outbursts of song that ushered in the greater Shelley.

In the next month he addresses to Harriet a poem of five stanzas in which he pleads with her for the exercise of "a slight endurance" of himself, whose heart, he said, was worthy of her hate. But she must be merciful, lest as the only solution open to him he should

[77] The name also of Shelley's companion, who was drowned with him in 1822.

[78] Letter from Mrs. Boinville to Hogg,—Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 533–4.

. . . endure
The misery of a fatal cure.

If she has cherished or now entertains dislike or hatred of him, he begs her to

. . . deign a nobler pride to prove,
And pity if thou canst not love.

There is reason to believe that Harriet, feeling that Shelley was drifting away from her, now tried coquetry. Says Thornton Hunt (son of Leigh) "when she left him,[79] it was not only in indulgence of self-will, but also *in the vain hope that her retreating would induce him to follow her*, perhaps in a more obedient spirit." [80] With this view Peacock probably coincided; for in Nightmare Abbey we read:

Marionetta felt secure of Scythrop's heart; and notwithstanding the difficulties that surrounded her, she could not debar herself from the pleasure of tormenting her lover, whom she kept in a perpetual fever. Sometimes she would meet him with the most unqualified affection; sometimes with the most chilling indifference; rousing him to anger by artificial coldness—softening him to love by eloquent tenderness.[81]

If these were Harriet's tactics, and if Shelley's subsequent action in any way hinged upon them, we shall see how ill-conceived they were.

"*Early in May* Shelley was in London," writes Professor Dowden; and then, a little later, speaking of the beginning of July, he says: "Shelley save for a brief interval between

[79] Probably with no thought of remaining alone for any considerable time, Harriet twice absented herself from Bracknell; going once to London, and later to Bath.

[80] Article on *Shelley* in *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1863, p. 197. The italics are mine.

[81] Ed. 1818. p. 51.

June 5 and June 18 had remained in London since the *latter days* of May." [82] Evidently, then, he did *not* remain in London during the first three weeks of May; else Professor Dowden would have said so in his second statement. Where was Shelley during these three weeks? At Bracknell, probably, with the Boinvilles. We are assured by the biographer just quoted that from March 23 until a date "early in May" Shelley did not call on the Godwins. During the whole of May and the first week of June, while Shelley was endeavoring to aid Godwin in another of the latter's financial embarrassments, they "met usually twice a week." [83]

On Wednesday, June 8th, Hogg visited the Court of King's Bench to hear the opening of the case of the King *vs.* DeBerenger, Cochrane, and others, the information having been drawn up by Hogg himself.[84] Afterward meeting Shelley in Cheapside he accompanied him to Godwin's establishment in Skinner Street, Shelley explaining that he wished to see the philosopher. But here Hogg must be permitted to tell his own story:

I followed him through the shop, which was the only entrance, and upstairs. We entered a room on the first floor; it was shaped like a quadrant. In the arc were windows; in one radius a fireplace, and in the other a door, and shelves with many old books. William Godwin was not at home. Bysshe strode about the room, causing the crazy floor of the ill-built, unowned dwelling-house to shake and tremble under his impatient footsteps. He appeared to be displeased at not finding the fountain of Political Justice. "Where is God-

[82] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 414. Italics mine.

[83] *Ibid.* i. 418.

[84] *Ibid.* ii. 536. The story of the trial which lasted two days, is told in the *Examiner* for Sunday, June 12, pp. 381–4. Sentence was passed on Tuesday, June 21, and was recorded in the *Examiner* for Sunday, June 26, 1814, pp. 415–16. Hogg took no public part in the proceedings.

win?" he asked me several times, as if I knew. I did not know, and, to say the truth, I did not care. He continued his uneasy promenade; and I stood reading the names of old English authors on the backs of the venerable volumes, when the door was partially and softly opened. A thrilling voice called "Shelley!" A thrilling voice answered, "Mary!" And he darted out of the room like an arrow from the bow of the far-shooting king. A very young female, fair and fair-haired, pale indeed, and with a piercing look, wearing a frock of tartan, an unusual dress in London at that time, had called him out of the room. He was absent a very short time—a minute or two; and then returned. "Godwin is out; there is no use in waiting." So we continued our walk along Holborn.

"Who was that, pray?" I asked; "a daughter?"

"Yes."

"A daughter of William Godwin?"

"The daughter of Godwin and Mary." [85]

The meeting thus graphically described by Hogg was followed by others, more clandestine than this; but not until Shelley who now left the city for ten days, had returned. Professor Dowden has conjectured that during these ten days Shelley was with his wife at Bath; [86] but it seems more likely that he now visited his Sussex relatives for the first time since his expulsion from Oxford. It is to be regretted that the squire of Field Place did not make the most of this opportunity for a reconciliation with his wayward son; for, says Hogg, "one may infer from . . . Bysshe's last letter to myself that his family might have had him then on easy terms, had they known how to negotiate a treaty of peace." [87] Instead, so unwelcome was Shelley made to feel by his father that he was required, when he appeared on the public ways, to wear the uniform of

[85] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 537.

[86] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 420, n.

[87] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*. ii. 545.

a young officer then visiting the Shelleys at Field Place.[88] The spectacle of "Captain Jones" [89] in an outfit that did not fit him would be humorous enough were it not that it is a too-striking symbol of the failure of a *rapprochement* between the poet and his family. Such a reconciliation at this time might, by removing one cause of Shelley's unhappiness, have had its beneficent effect in moulding the subsequent history of Shelley's relations with Harriet. But unfortunately Harriet, who had never been welcomed at Field Place, would not have been more welcome in this June of 1814; and if the boy now unburdened his heart to his mother and sisters on the subject of his unhappiness with his first wife, it is a practical certainty that his complaints were entertained, encouraged, and fortified by his listeners. He had married "out of his class"; Harriet was an inn-keeper's daughter. What, the Shelleys would have argued, could be expected from such a union? And thus the visit, which might in one way and another, have been a blessing to all persons concerned, but added another act to a steadily-deepening tragedy.

"From the 20th of June," writes Mrs. Marshall, "until the end of the month Shelley was at Skinner Street every day, often to dinner." [90] Then, too, occurred, no doubt, some of those meetings now famous in the histories of "romantic loves" when Mary, "book in hand" would leave the Skinner Street household to haunt the church-yard of Old St. Pancras, where her mother lay buried; and there would meet Shelley, to whom she would retail her sufferings at the hands of her step-mother, the second Mrs. Godwin.

[88] Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* ii. 548.

[89] The nickname under which Shelley labored during his enforced masquerade. Hogg, *Life of Shelley.* ii. 548.

[90] *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 54.

Meanwhile, Harriet Shelley, according to Mrs. Godwin's account, "came up from Bracknell suddenly, and saw me and my husband alone. She was very much agitated, and wept, poor dear young lady, a great deal, because Mr. Shelley had told her at Bracknell that he was desperately in love with Mary Godwin. She implored us to forbid him our house and prevent his seeing Mary." [91] Claire Clairmont and Mary, probably as a result of the appeal from Harriet, visited Shelley's wife at her father's home in Chapel Street where Mary assured Harriet that she would not think of Shelley's love for her. Yet Claire Clairmont said Shelley's threat of and attempt at suicide of which Mrs. Godwin has left a vivid account, "overcame Mary's resolution." [92]

The story of the threat and the attempted suicide runs, in Mrs. Godwin's account to Lady Mountcashell, as follows:

. . . one day when Godwin was out, Shelley suddenly entered the shop and went upstairs. "I perceived him from the counting-house and hastened after him, and overtook him at the schoolroom door. I entreated him not to enter. He looked extremely wild. He pushed me aside with extreme violence, and entering, walked straight to Mary. 'They wish to separate us, my beloved; but Death shall unite us,' and offered her a bottle of laudanum. 'By this you can escape from tyranny; and this,' taking a small pistol from his pocket, 'shall reunite me to you.' Poor Mary turned as pale as a ghost, and my poor silly Claire, who is so timid even at trifles, at the sight of the pistol filled the room with her shrieks. I was also much alarmed, and hastened to my husband's study, where Mr. Marshall was sitting waiting to dine with us. He hastened upstairs, and I know not very well what he said, but whatever it was it had influence, or perhaps it was poor

[91] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 543.
[92] *Ibid.* ii. 544, note.

ST. PANCRAS, MIDDLESEX

Where, over the grave of her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Godwin was courted by Shelley.

possible,[95] and sent for me, then residing at Bath. You may suppose how I felt at the disclosure. I was laid up for a fortnight after. I could do nothing for myself. He begged me to live. The doctors gave me over. They said 'twas impossible. I saw his despair. The agony of my beloved sister; and owing to the great strength of my constitution I lived." [96]

Undoubtedly this version of those stolen meetings is a less favorable one than that usually found in *Lives* of the poet whom we are now studying; but from these biographies it has been ruled out, perhaps because it includes the testimony of Shelley *against* the woman with whom he spent eight long years of his life; testimony *communicated* to the woman to whom at the time of writing he was bound by the bonds of lawful wedlock and by their three years' life together. Yet observe that this same note is struck by the poet again two and a half years later in a letter to Eliza Westbrook after the death of Harriet. The letter has perished or is temporarily hidden away, perhaps, in some lawyer's pigeonhole. But it was on hand in 1817 at the time of the Chancery Suit instituted by the Westbrooks over the custodianship of Shelley's children. Then it appeared as Exhibit 10; and in Eliza Westbrook's affidavit, sworn 10 Jan. 1817 (which has fortunately survived) it

[95] Shelley continued to believe it possible. Cf. his letter to Harriet from Troyes, 13 August 1814, "I write to urge you to come to Switzerland, where you will at last find one firm and constant friend." *Letters* i. 425–6. The earlier proposal to Elizabeth Hitchener, Friday, 18 October 1811, would indicate that Shelley was original enough to think out such a plan himself. At that time Harriet concurred in the plan; but she found out Miss Hitchener's intentions at length; and so was not likely to give her assent a second time to such a scheme. Cf. *Letters*. i. 145; and Harriet's letter to Catherine Nugent, Nov. 14, 1812. Letters from *Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent*. p. 30.

[96] Letter, Nov. 20, 1814. *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent*. p. 58.

was stated that Shelley in this letter had alleged to Eliza that "the Lady whose Union with the said Defendant this Deponent might excusably regard as the cause of her Sister's ruin" was Mary Godwin.[97] To Harriet therefore, in 1814, and to her sister in December 1816 or January 1817, Shelley attempted to exonerate himself for his sudden attachment of 1814 by placing the blame upon Mary.

He had done the same thing in 1811, in writing to Hogg and Elizabeth Hitchener concerning the incidents of those days which ended in his elopement with Harriet Westbrook. The latter's father had "persecuted her in a most horrible way" [98] *then; now* it was the persecution of Mary by her stepmother which went to the same tune. Harriet had then threatened suicide; [99] Mary—who must long since have heard of all this history of 1811—*now* threatened it. And so by his own descriptions we get a picture of an ardent, sympathetic, yet thoughtless youth, finding a new plea for his knight-errantry the only law he needed for an abandonment of his first "lady fair."

We cannot be content, however, to rest with this version. It leaves out of account—and will continue to do so—all those allegations which a later member of the Shelley family endeavored to solidify into a substantial structure of reproach to the good name of Harriet Shelley; and of exonerating Shelley for abandoning Harriet for Mary. Hogg, and Hookham, and Peacock, and Trelawny, all of whom knew Shelley, and all of whom—except Trelawny—also knew Harriet, would give no support to such posthumous scandals; [100] and

[97] *Appendix*, p. 468, to H. B. Forman's ed. of Medwin's *Revised Life of Shelley.*

[98] Letter to Hogg (?) Aug. 3, 1811. *Letters.* i. 129.

[99] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Oct. 26, 1811. *Letters.* i. 149.

[100] Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author.* ii. 15.

not even the sophistical indirections of the poet's biographers can avail to set up this thing of evil, so that it will endure one day's white light of truth.[101] But it is possible, without exaggerating the significance of the story told by Shelley himself, to understand the various steps that led up to the momentous issue of July 28, 1814.

It was, according to Mary's biographer, on the 14th of July that Harriet at length came to London from Bath "summoned thither by a letter from her husband."[102] This tallies with Harriet's story as to what drew her to the city. The proposal as to the combined household to embrace his wife and the sister-of-his-soul being then made, and Harriet objecting to a repetition of this kind of experiment, Shelley for a time grew concerned over Harriet's collapse, which, following immediately, resulted in her being "laid up for a fortnight after." That fortnight would have ended on *July 28, 1814.*

Shelley in despair sent for Peacock, "Nothing that I ever read in tale or history," wrote Peacock, "could present a more striking image of a sudden, violent, irresistible, uncontrollable passion than that under which I found him labouring when, at his request, I went up from the country to call on him in London. Between his old feelings toward Harriet, *from whom he was not then separated*, and his new passion for Mary, he showed in his looks, in his gestures, in his speech, the state of a mind 'suffering like a little kingdom, the nature

[101] "Lady Shelley is anxious to assert that she was a prostitute to a stableman—Shelley would not have permitted this wicked lie nor would I—but we shall pass away and then there is none to stop her."—Letter of Edward John Trelawny to Claire Clairmont, 15 November 1875. *Letters of Edward John Trelawny*, p. 251. Trelawny did not speak "by the book" as to Shelley's attitude toward this scandal. We are glad he did not know that Shelley did once (though not earlier than 1817) permit himself to entertain such a story.

[102] Marshall, *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 62.

of an insurrection.' His eyes were bloodshot, his hair and dress disordered. He caught up a bottle of laudanum, and said 'I never part from this.' He added: 'I am always repeating to myself your lines from Sophocles:

> Man's happiest lot is not to be;
> And when we tread life's thorny steep,
> Most blest are they, who earliest free
> Descend to death's eternal sleep.'

Again, he said more calmly: 'Every one who knows me must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal, but she can do neither.' I said, 'It always appeared to me that you were very fond of Harriet.' Without affirming or denying this, he answered: 'But you did not know how I hated her sister.' " [103] Was this the

> —gentle story of two lovers young,
> Who met in innocence and died in sorrow,
> *And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung*
> *Like curses on them*, . . .[104]

of which Shelley wrote, perhaps in 1816, or 1817, after the suicide of Harriet Shelley?

When the plan for the joint household, which was to include Harriet, Mary, and himself, broke down, Shelley "endeavoured to get Harriet to concur in this arrangement" writes Mrs. Marshall, "but she did no such thing." [105] This is

[103] *Works.* ii. 417–18. The translation is of Sophocles' *Œdipus Colonnus.* 1225.

[104] Shelley, *Poetical Works.* 2nd Ed. 1839. p. 321. This fragment was assigned by Mary to 1819; but by Professor Bradley (conjecturally) to 1816 or 1817.

[105] *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 63.

probably based on Mary's statement to Leigh Hunt in 1825: "They did not part by mutual consent"; [106]—a view supported by the testimony of Peacock, who says: "The separation did not take place by mutual consent. I cannot think that Shelley ever so represented it. He never did so to me: and the account which Harriet herself gave me of the entire proceeding was decidedly contradictory of any such supposition." [107]

Southey a few years after wrote Shelley: "While you were at Keswick [in 1811] you told your bride that you regarded marriage as a mere ceremony and would live with her no longer than you liked her. I dare say you told her this before the ceremony, and that you persuaded her that there was nothing sacred in the tie. . . . She trusted to your heart, not your opinions. She relied upon your generosity, your affection, your tenderness, your first love. The wife of your youth might well rely upon these, and with the more confidence when she became the mother of your first children." [108] To this Shelley replied in a strain since excessively popular with his biographers, wherein

> With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
> Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
> As, "Well, well, we know," or "we could, an if we would";
> Or, "If we list to speak," or "There be, an if they might,"
> Or such ambiguous giving out

he endeavored to place the blame not now upon Mary (as in 1814 and 1816) but upon Harriet; driven to it, perhaps, by "a nagging sense of shabbiness and treachery." [109]

[106] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 426.

[107] *Works*. iii. 417.

[108] *Correspondence of Robert Southey with Caroline Bowles*. Appendix, p. 364.

[109] Twain, "In Defense of Harriet Shelley," in *In Defense of Harriet Shelley, and Other Essays*. p. 21.

"This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life," commented Mary, in her note on *Alastor*. "It will be sufficient to say, that in all he did, he, at the time of doing it, believed himself justified to his own conscience." [110] So he may have felt, in 1814, when Harriet would not lend herself to his wild scheme, and the only way out was desertion of Harriet and elopement with Mary. But if he did feel "justified" at that time, there remains only to be said what Mary wrote in another connection years afterward:

> It ranks among the most painful of our young feelings, to find that we are justly accused of acting wrong. Our motives—we believed them disinterested or justifiable; we have advanced a wondrous step in life before we can concede even to ourselves that alloy may be mingled with what we deem pure gold; ignorant of the soil and culture of our own hearts, we feel sure that no base mixture can form a part of what we fancy to be a mine of virgin ore.[111]

"Circumstances meant so little to him," thinks Mr. Arthur Symons, "that he was unconscious of the cruelty of change of sentiment, and thus of the extent of his cruelty to women. He aimed at moral perfection, but was really of a perfect æsthetic selfishness." [112] Mr. Paul Elmer More cannot resist a feeling of "resentment at his self-absorption and his complete assumption of righteousness." [113]

But there is another side to all this, and to stop here in our preparation for understanding the events of 28 July 1814 were to make a serious error. It has been necessary to spend so much time in analyzing Shelley's relations with Harriet,

[110] *Poetical Works.* ed. 1839. i. 139.
[111] *Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck.* ii. 299.
[112] *Romantic Movement in English Poetry.* p. 271.
[113] Review of C. E. Brock's *Shelley, the Man and the Poet* in *Nation.* (N. Y.) Feb. 20, 1910. p. 134.

because grave injustice has been done by one chronicler after another to the memory of Shelley's first wife; and to Shelley himself. A deeper spiritual struggle was going on underneath the cover of the meetings and greetings and partings now already grown tedious by their number. Setting aside for the moment the question of Shelley's duty to his first wife and to the mother of his children,[114] and thinking of him as free to choose between these two, without fear or favor, why should he choose for his second mate such a woman as Mary Godwin? Why should Mary be drawn to Shelley, and how could she attach herself to one whose history had been at best a chequered one, whose means of subsistence were irregular and unreliable, whose spirit was more often melancholy than gay, and who could not offer her the name of wife since that was then borne to him by another woman?

It requires no unusual perspicacity for one who compares Mary's letters, even her earliest, with the latest letters written by Harriet, to discern that the mental range of the former was vastly wider than that of the latter. Harriet, after her marriage with Shelley, tried to "catch up" with him, read many books he prescribed to her, grew proficient enough to translate a French novel into English, and echoed Shelley's "isms" for a while in her letters to friends. But the pace was a stiff one. Harriet had not been brought up at the feet of a philosopher. She was born under the roof of a prosperous inn-keeper. Her mother had not thought, or experienced, those things which make *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* so important not only to the feminist cause, but also to our proper understanding of Mary Godwin. She does not seem either to have inherited or to have absorbed a love or a sympathetic appreciation for

[114] A second child of this first union was to be born to Shelley and Harriet in the autumn of 1814.

literature. Mary, on the other hand, had grown up in a bookshop to which some of the most eminent thinkers repaired from time to time for a chat with her father. Her mother had been a woman admired, courted, flattered, and justly honored for her very unusual talents in conversation and writing. That mother had been an individualist, a rebel, a vigorous voice, a commanding personality whom, though death early overwhelmed, succeeding generations have not forgotten; one who, believing that there was no higher law on earth than love, had lived out of wedlock with an American captain, borne him a daughter, and been deserted by him; had given herself, still without the sanction of any service, ecclesiastical or civil, to William Godwin, but before the advent of their child—Mary Godwin herself—had undergone the ceremony of marriage, that the birth might be legitimized. Harriet was beautiful; Mary less strikingly so; but Harriet had not, when a child, written stories and lectures later to be delivered by a young relative to an imaginary audience from an improvised pulpit over a bookshop,[115] or herself engaged in formal debate on the proper sphere for women.[116] Unlike Mary, she would not be likely to meet Coleridge, or Hazlitt, or Lamb, at her father's home, to hear them discourse, to listen to them as they quoted prose and poetry, or to read, herself, from their earliest works.

Mary, before she met Shelley, was already a familiar of his world—the only world he really ever knew—the world some of us know by hearsay and reputation, but only imperfectly ever—the world of poetry and philosophy. Had he been

[115] Aaron Burr's Journal, Feb. 15, 1812. *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 22, 36.

[116] *Ibid.* Feb. 15, 1812. *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 33.

free, according to the laws of society, to select between the two he must—though Mary's was not so warm a nature as Harriet's—infallibly have selected Mary, and been applauded for his discretion by the coteries to which he and Mary severally belonged.

> Who better framed than this highly-gifted youth to love and be beloved, and to reap unalienable joy from an unblamed passion? If his heart had slept but a few years longer, he might have been saved; but it awoke in its infancy; it had power, but no knowledge; and it was ruined, even as a too-early-blowing bud is nipt by the killing frost.[117]

And now for an answer to those other questions relating to Mary, and her choice of Shelley, an outcast from his family and university, a wanderer on the face of the earth, an enthusiast, a philosopher, and a poet. If Shelley's history had been chequered, so had her mother's; if his means of subsistence were irregular, and unreliable, so too were her father's; if his spirit was melancholy, it suited hers which was always of a sombre cast.[118] Finally, if he could not propose marriage, this had not hindered either of her parents from uniting their fortunes with those of one esteemed worthy of all efforts of love and single-hearted devotion. The fact, stressed by Medwin in his *Revised Life of Shelley*,[119] that a lover already inconstant to another might prove in the issue, inconstant also to her, could scarcely have occurred to her, and certainly had no weight in determining her course, for

> to bestow was the passion of her guileless heart . . . that she should be happy during his mortal career was to be her study, her gift, the

[117] Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*. i. 58–9.
[118] No one of her novels is free from this dominating mood.
[119] p. 122.

aim of her life. In consenting to be his, she also had made a condition, that, if defeat awaited . . . and that again a wanderer he was obliged to fly before his enemies, she was not to be divided from him; . . . If he departed, she should accompany him.[120]

So it came to pass that at four o'clock on the morning of the 28th of July 1814, Shelley, Mary, and Claire Clairmont left London together in a post chaise for Dover, where, by taking on fresh horses at Dartford, they arrived before four o'clock on the next day.[121] The whole of the journey to the Continent thus begun has come down to us in the pages of Mary's journal which from this time on was kept up, more or less regularly, to the death of Shelley in 1822. In 1817 certain extracts (some of them altered) from this private "log" of travels were published in a foolscap octavo volume of 183 pages entitled *History of Six Weeks' Tour through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, with Letters Descriptive of a Sail Round the Lake of Geneva, and of the Glaciers of Chamouni.* In that form the story of the early days of their elopement is known to most students of the poet; but wherever possible in the present account I shall make use of three other sources not hitherto employed in *lives* of Shelley.[122]

[120] Mary Shelley, *Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck.* ii. 251–2.

[121] —"often as I have before travelled the Kent road, yet I could not see without surprise, the astonishing number of public and private carriages with which it abounds, and which must have doubtless much increased in the last few months."—Bernard, *Tour.* p. 4.

[122] 1. The Hon. Richard Boyle Bernard's *Tour Through Some Parts of France, Switzerland, Savoy, Germany, and Belgium, during the Summer and Autumn of 1814.* London. Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, Paternoster Row. 1815. pp. xx., 336.

Bernard's tour began, he says, "about the middle of July," perhaps a fortnight before Shelley and Mary started. He covered much of the same ground and left a very circumstantial, albeit somewhat biased and narrow-minded account of it, in this work.

The travellers who had come thus hastily to England's ancient port were in constant fear of being followed either by Godwin himself or by his wife; [123] and so, instead of waiting for the packet, made arrangements for being conveyed to Calais in a light smack which in normal weather should have taken them across in two or three hours. But the weather had not been normal. The day of their leaving London was described by Mary as "a hotter day than has been known in this climate for many years." [124] The heat was very trying to her; and at Dover, finding conditions little better, she had taken a sea-bath to mitigate her extreme suffering from the heat.[125] At six o'clock [126] they set sail.

It were no mighty leap methinks from Calais to Dover. The eye easily discerns the sister land; they were united once; and the little path that runs between looks in a map but as a trodden footway through high grass. Yet this small interval was to save us; the sea was to raise a wall of adamant [against] misery.[127]

When they embarked, there was little wind, but this freshened after a while, growing "violent and contrary" as time

2. Mary Shelley's novels, *The Last Man* (3 vols., 1826) and *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck.* (3 vols., 1830).

Fictionized versions of this flight, and crossing, and of sights seen in France appeared here for the first time.

3. Charles I. Elton's *An Account of Shelley's Visits to France, Switzerland, and Savoy, in the Years 1814 to 1816.* London. 1894.

"The object of this essay is to illustrate the little volume containing the history of Shelley's six weeks' tour, and the letters on Chamouni and the environs of Geneva, which first appeared in 1817"—p. 1.

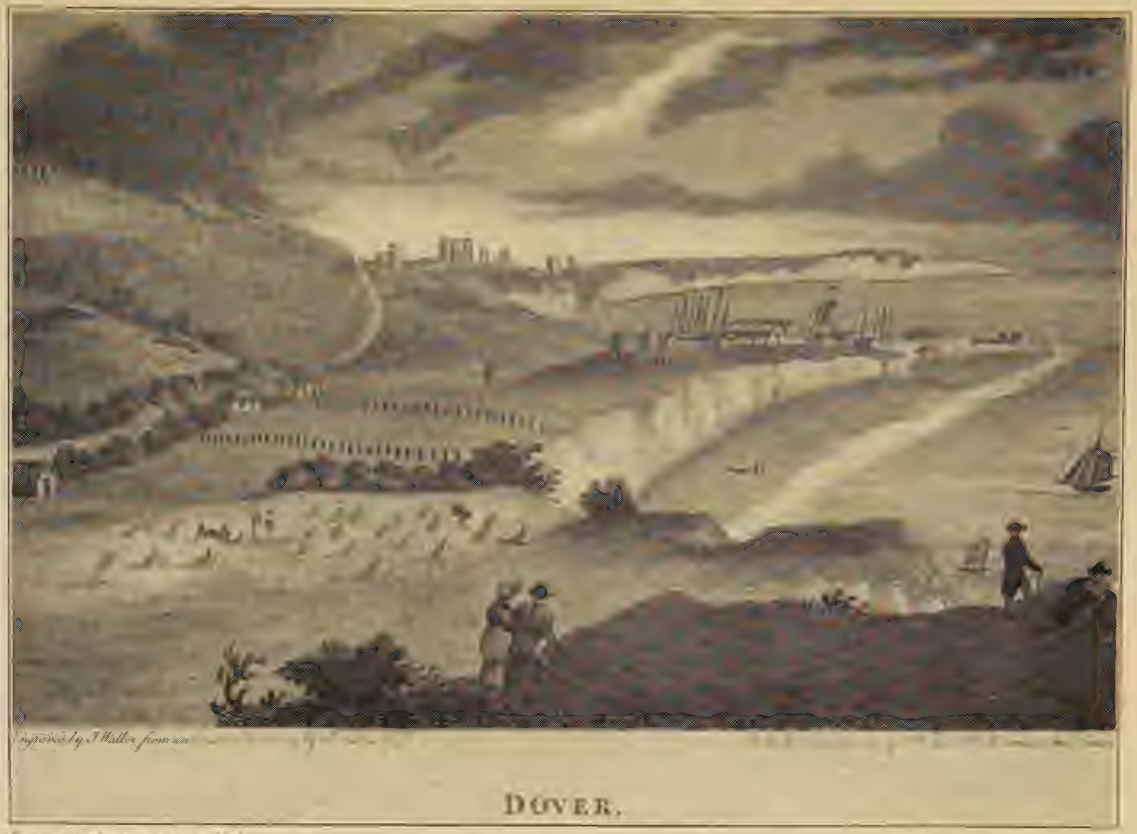
[123] "I was divided between anxiety for her [Mary's] health and terror lest our pursuers should arrive." Shelley, Journal, July 28, 1814. Quoted, Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 441.

[124] *History of a Six Weeks' Tour.* 1817. pp. 1–2.

[125] *Ibid.* p. 2.

[126] Journal, July 28, 1814. Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 441.

[127] *The Last Man.* i. 183–4.



DOVER.

From a contemporary aquatint.

Thrice visited by Shelley—in 1814, 1816, and 1818.

passed. The moon had been out in full glory as they left Dover; but now it was obscured by a rising storm. A thunder-squall burst over them, driving them toward Calais. "Mary did not know our danger," wrote Shelley afterwards, in the journal; "she was resting between my knees, that were unable to support her; she did not speak or look, but I felt that she was there." [128]

It sufficed for their two full hearts that they were together on the dark wide sea; . . . They could ill discern each other . . . a dream-like veil was cast over their features, as sleep curtains out the soul, so that we look on the beloved slumberer, and say "He is there, though the mystery of repose wraps me from him"; so now darkness blinded and divided them; but hand clasped hand; he felt that one existed who was his own, his faithful; and she rejoiced in the accomplishment of the master-sentiment of her soul, the desire of self-devotion, self-annihilation, for one who loved her. The passion that warmed their hearts had no fears, no tumult, no doubt. One to the other they sufficed.[129]

At sunrise they drove on the sands at Calais. Shelley said: "Mary, look; the sun rises over France." It had indeed risen for them on a life of new hopes, new scenes, new triumphs. In the old fortified coast town, once English, they waited the arrival of their luggage, necessarily left behind at Dover to be brought over by the packet. When this came, Mrs. Godwin came with it in the hope that she might persuade her own daughter, Claire, to return with her.[129a]

[128] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley.* i. 442. Cf. *Laon and Cythna.* vi. 2543–4:

—the two who stood beneath that night
Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other.

[129] *Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck.* iii. 23–4.

[129a] Professor Dunn comments on this: "You here touch upon the necessity

In a letter, from Godwin to John Taylor of Norwich, November 8, 1814, the philosopher reverted to the flight of "those unhappy girls, with their pretend [ed] protector," and said:

Mrs. Godwin has felt the most earnest anxiety to recover her daughter. To Mary I shall always be forward to extend every degree [? of consideration] in my power, whenever she wants it. But [? with Claire the case] is extremely different. She from no [motive but fri]volity, & a childish love of new things, [? has thrust] herself into a most improper & dangerous [?situation.] I have therefore had recourse to every means [?possible] for her restoration.[130]

Perhaps when Shelley and Mrs. Godwin came face to face at Calais he expressed himself in some such manner as that recorded in Claire Clairmont's transcripts of some letters addressed in 1814 by Mrs. Godwin to Lady Mountcashell. Asked whether he was in love with Claire as well as Mary he is there reported to have said:

No, I am not in the least in love with her; but she is a nice little girl, and her mother is such a vulgar, commonplace woman, without an idea of philosophy, I do not think she is a proper person to form the mind of a young girl.[131]

Claire remained steadfast to her friends, and Mrs. Godwin returned defeated and anxious to London. As late as November, Claire laid down the only terms on which she would conform to a new plan of life evolved for her by the Godwins. The conditions were two in number—"first that she should in

for elopement. The one point of it was that Shelley feared Mrs. Godwin's pursuit to recover Claire. I have this on high authority."

[130] From the holograph letter, in possession of Arthur E. Turner, Esq., 324 Finchley Road, London, N. W. 3, and here given from his transcript and by his permission.

[131] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 545.

all situations openly proclaim & earnestly support, a total contempt for the laws & institutions of society,—& secondly, that no restraint should be imposed upon her correspondence & intercourse with those from whom she was separated." [132] The Godwins did not comply with the conditions and Claire continued to live with the Shelleys.

Mary, almost immediately upon landing on those sands where Wordsworth had walked with his daughter Caroline, twelve years before,[133] had been impressed with the strangeness of language, dress, and manners of the French people.[134] Shelley engaged a cabriolet and the trio started for Paris at six P. M. on July 30. The cabriolet was secured, no doubt, to obviate the necessity of changing luggage at every post, and to avoid any delay that might arise from not finding a carriage at every station." [135] These carriages were sometimes drawn by two, sometimes by three horses. Shelley's conveyance was drawn by "three horses . . . placed abreast, the tallest in the middle; . . . the harnesses were of rope; and the postillion, a queer, upright little fellow with a long pig-tail, craqueed his whip [136] as was the custom of these drivers." [137] The first stop was Boulogne at 10 o'clock. There a civil room-maid provoked Mary to comment (unfavorably to English maids) on the contrast between such servants in France and England. Horses were ordered to be kept ready to proceed during the

[132] From MS. desc. in note 130 above.

[133] Cf. his sonnet, *It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free. Poetical Works.* ed. Knight. 1886. ii. 292.

[134] *History of a Six Weeks' Tour.* pp. 5–6.

[135] Bernard thus explains the advantages of taking this type of carriage from Calais to Paris in July 1814. *Tour.* p. 10.

[136] *History of a Six Weeks' Tour.* p. 8.

[137] Bernard, *Tour.* p. 11: "The postillions are provided with boots of a very inconvenient size, and with whips which they are perpetually cracking, not much to the comfort of the ears of their passengers."

night; but the party was thoroughly worn out, and could not go forward without a few hours' rest. So the night was spent at Boulogne. Thence on the morrow they hastened to Abbeville, slept there, and afterward drove without resting by day or night until they halted, on Tuesday afternoon, August 2, at the Hotel de Vienne, Paris, having come one hundred and eighty miles over the roads in three days.

Financial embarrassments, in the course of which Shelley sacrificed his watch and chain, ended fortunately in the receipt of a remittance of £60 from England, and after a sweltering week in the city [138] they determined to set out on foot for Uri, and to purchase an ass, to carry Mary when she should be unable to walk, and to bear their necessary luggage—the heavier luggage following by diligence. Not even the friendly warnings of the proprietress of the hotel could prevent the girls from essaying, with Shelley, highroads which they were told were infested with unprincipled men formerly attached to the armies that had for so many years swept back and forth over *la belle France*. On the evening of Monday, August 8, they set out from Paris, but discovered before they reached Charenton that the ass Shelley had purchased was quite worthless. Accordingly on the day following they secured a mule; and Mary wrote:

About nine o'clock we departed. We were clad in black silk. I rode on the mule, which carried also our portmanteau; S[helley] and Claire followed, bringing a small basket of provisions. At about one we arrived at Gros Blois, where, under the shade of trees, we ate our bread and fruit, and drank our wine, thinking of Don Quixote and Sancho.[139]

[138] Where they failed to find Godwin's and Mary Wollstonecraft's old friend, the authoress Helen Maria Williams, at her address.

[139] *History of a Six Weeks' Tour.* p. 16.

By Guignes they proceeded to Provins—where the Tour de Cesar, the crumbling battlements of the upper town, and the ancient church of St. Quiriance attracted them—and Nogent. At the latter town they had an opportunity to observe the ruin the Cossacks had left in their wake, and were confirmed thereby in their detestation of war. The state of things they found in St. Aubin not only left its record upon the pages of the *Six Weeks' Tour* but also furnished Mary with the details of a picture she drew, many years later, in *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*, in which the scene of the France of 1814 lives again:

> A few steps disclosed . . . the village sacked . . . half burnt, and quite deserted . . . The exiles dared not read in each other's eyes the expression of . . . horror; they walked on like men rebuked. . . . The English marched on; they dared not eye the ravagers; shame and hate contended—while the sarcasm and scornful laugh which followed them drugged with wormwood the bitter draught. In vain, west, or east, or south, did they turn their eyes, a sad variety of the same misery presented itself on every side . . . women and children had not been spared, or were only left to perish for want. . . . With the exception of these sufferers, the landscape was a blank. . . . They entered the ruins of another village; the desolation here was even more complete, although more recent; the flame was hardly spent upon the blackened rafters; the piles which the day before had been smiling dwellings, still smoked; a few domestic animals were skulking about. There was a church at the end of what had been a street; this was not spared. The English entered the desecrated aisle.[140]

At Troyes on August 13, Shelley wrote to Harriet the proposal already mentioned, that she should join himself and Mary in Switzerland; and detailed for her as afterward he

[140] *Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*. iii. 300–2.

was to do for his friend Peacock some of his impressions of travel:

We came 120 miles in four days; the last two days we passed over the country that was the seat of war. I cannot describe to you the frightful desolation of this scene; village after village entirely ruined and burned, the white ruins towering in the innumerable forms of destruction among the beautiful trees. The inhabitants were famished; families once independent now beg their bread in this wretched country; no provisions; no accommodation; filth, misery, and famine everywhere.[141]

Shelley had sprained his ankle, and could "pedestrianize" no farther. The mule was therefore sold, an open *voiture* was bought, and a man secured who agreed to drive them to Neufchatel in six days. They set out immediately; and on Sunday August 14th were at Vandeuvres. Then by Besançon and Mort they came on the evening of the 18th to Noé. The road led to the west of the range that encircles the plateau of Besançon. From the top they saw

the whole expanse of the valley filled with a white undulating mist, over which the piny hills pierced like islands. The sun had just risen, and a ray of the red light lay on the waves of this fluctuating vapour. To the west, opposite the sun, it seemed driven by the light against the rock in immense masses of foaming cloud

Even now my heart adoreth.
Wonderful!
Look, sister, e'er the vapour dim
thy brain:
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake paving in the morning
sky
With azure waves which burst in
silver light,

[141] Letters, i. 427. And cf. *Preface to Laon and Cythna:* "I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war," etc.

until it became lost in the distance, mixing its tints with the fleecy sky. . . .

[and at the close of that day, as they proceeded to Pontarlier]: The evening was most beautiful; the horned moon hung in the light of sunset that threw a glow of unusual depth of redness above the piny mountains and the dark deep valleys which they included; [142] at intervals in the woods were beautiful lawns interspersed with picturesque clumps of trees, and dark pines overshadowed our road.[143]

Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;

Look, how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet!—it rises
As Ocean at the inchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

The fragments of the cloud are scattered up—
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair—
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes—my brain

[142] Journal, Aug. 18. *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 75.

[143] *History of a Six Weeks' Tour.* p. 38. The description is transferred in the *Tour,* from a description of scenery encountered on the following day, and is slightly altered in the later version. For this parallel between the *Journal* and *Prometheus Unbound* I am indebted to Mr. Elton.

Grows dizzy—see'st thou shapes
within the mist?
—*Prometheus Unbound* II. iii.
17–27, 43–50.

Here, as later in Italy, a pine-forest attracted them and they entered it, finding "a scene of enchantment, where every sound and sight contributed to charm. Our mossy seat in the deepest recesses of the wood was enclosed from the world by an impenetrable veil." [144]

Since Mary has declared that it *was* impenetrable, perhaps their *voiturier* cannot be well blamed for thinking that they had gone on ahead of him. But the trio paid heavily for letting that individual get out of sight for they were obliged to walk three leagues, hire a boy to ride after the man, engage another *voiture,* and thus proceed as far as Pontarlier before catching their fugitive driver.

Somewhere on the journey from Neufchatel to Lucerne, they passed a waterfall; and Shelley suggested that they should bathe in the cataract. "But the driver . . ." objected Mary. Shelley found his presence unobjectionable. "But we have no towels!" Mary pleaded. "We could dry ourselves with leaves," Shelley replied.[145]

They arrived at Pontarlier on the evening of the 19th. On the next day they passed the Swiss border and arrived at St. Sulpice. The road now

led between the highest points of the mountain range: the rocks overhung them above, and below were masses of trees, and a river reflecting the sun. The mountains were "so little asunder" that in time

[144] As in note 142 above.
[145] Claire's MS. Diary. Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer's Collection.

of war the ravine was closed by a chain. On the neck of the pass the Alpine ranges broke upon their view and they saw beneath their feet the stony tract of Val Travers, the flats of Neufchatel, and the shining expanse of the lake.[146]

That night they slept at Neufchatel. Here some negotiations with a banker ended successfully for the party. Shelley returned to the girls "staggering under the weight of a large canvas bag full of silver." An attempt to secure a place for the trio in the diligence was unsuccessful; but by the kind offices of a Swiss traveller a *voiturier* was engaged to take them as far as Lucerne. On Sunday morning, August 21, they left Neufchatel at six o'clock by the Soleure route, their Swiss acquaintance who had met them that morning by prearrangement, accompanying them a little distance out of the town. Wearied with much riding in *voitures*, yet uncertain whether to remain in Switzerland or press on into Italy, the party stood in need of rest and an opportunity to recuperate its strength and brighten its temper. On the 22nd the Journal discovers "Shelley . . . in a jocosely horrible mood." It was well for them all that a temporary halt was made at Brunnen, on the Bay of Uri. The broken-down château in which they at first quartered themselves not proving endurable, they moved into lodgings in a place called the Château. Remembering the scene, Mary wrote in after years:

I have visited the lakes of Lucerne and Uri, where the snowy mountains descend almost perpendicularly to the water, casting black and impenetrable shades, which would cause a gloomy and mournful appearance, were it not for the most verdant islands that relieve the eye by their gay appearance; I have seen this lake agitated by a tempest, when the wind tore up whirlwinds of water, and gave you an

[146] Elton, *An Account of Shelley's Visit.* etc. p. 35.

idea of what the waterspout must be on the great ocean, and the waves dash with fury the base [147] of the mountain.[148]

Shelley now busied himself with reading Tacitus, the Abbé Barruel, and Shakespeare; and on the 25th of August wrote out part of the fragmentary romance that has come down to us under the title of *The Assassins.* As Professor Dowden points out, the connection between Shelley's reading on the first day at Brunnen, of Tacitus' account of the siege of Jerusalem, and the reference to that siege in the opening paragraph of *The Assassins* leaves no doubt from what source Shelley had his material. It is less easy to ascertain whence he got his misconception that the "Assassins" of whom he writes were Christians. The only sect (it was also called "Ismailitish") of the name of which information is now forthcoming was founded by Hassan Sabah, a Mahometan, in the eleventh century, for the purpose of spreading doctrines of infidelity, immorality, and atheism, through a secret order whose membership should yield implicit obedience to the Superior Ruler. These doctrines, Hassan hoped, would bring about the overthrow of thrones and altars, since "morality and religion are the best sureties of the obedience of nations and the security of princes." [149] The name of the order was derived from the drugging of adepts with hashish (henbane) provoking celestial visions and mad frenzy as a result of which these young men could be made to perform any act however wild or unlawful at the suggestion of the master of the order. The partakers of hashish were called "hashishin" (herb-eaters) a name easily corrupted into "assassins." Their deeds

[147] Should this not read, "against the base"?

[148] *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus.* 1818. ch. xvii.

[149] Chevalier Joseph von Hammer, *History of the Assassins,* tr. by Oswald Charles Wood, M.D. 1835. pp. 41–52.

of murder gave that universal significance to the name "assassin" which now obtains. "From the confines of Khorassan to the mountains of Syria, from the Musdoramus to Lebanon, from the Caspian to the Mediterranean, extended the widely spread ramifications of the empire of the Assassins; their centre being the grand-master [often referred to as "The Old Man of the Mountain"] in his mountain fort at Alamut, in Irak." [150] Shelley selected the "solitudes of Lebanon," and in particular the valley of Bethzatanai, as the scene of his story; but it is obvious throughout that it was the scenery of Switzerland, by which he was surrounded when he began the tale, which we chiefly get in the story. There is some borrowing from Volney's *Ruins of Empires;* [151] slight dependence on Godwin's *St. Leon;* [152] names of characters are borrowed or adapted from Southey's *Thalaba;* [153] the Wandering Jew reappears, in the rôle of Shelley's own later Prometheus; the incident of the stranger-guest offering to till the garden is from *Zofloya* through *Zastrozzi;* the episode of the little girl and her favorite snake prepares us for a repetition of the image in *Laon and Cythna;* [154] a good deal of symbolism is injected to reflect the philosophy of the piece from new angles; [155] but the fragment left incomplete at the opening of

[150] History of the Assassins, 1835. p. 92.

[151] Cf. the description of the ruins in the vale of Bethzatanai with Volney, *Ruins.* 1811. p. 2.

[152] The encounter of the first person narrator, early in the story, with a stranger of mystery, his reception of him, clandestine and unknown to his wife; the locked room of the stranger, the feeling of guilt on the narrator's part at concealing the truth from his family. etc., are in both tales.

[153] "Abeldir" from "Abdaldar" (*Thalaba*) and perhaps also from Monk Lewis' "Abellino"; and Maimuna (Shelley's pet name for Mme. Boinville) from *Thalaba.*

[154] *Laon and Cythna,* i. 280–306.

[155] Vegetation preying on ruined temples and palaces; the solitary column, springs, fountains, meteors, fogs, are some of these.

the fourth chapter is too slight to give us any very clear notion of what Shelley intended to do with it.

The thinking of Shelley's assassins runs truest to that promulgated among these people by Abdallah, the son of Maimun-Kaddah, and described by Von Hammer; and as Shelley's christening one of his characters in this tale "Abdallah" suggests that he might have had before him an earlier account than Von Hammer's of the ideas of this Moslem leader, I make no apology for quoting a part of Von Hammer's chronicle regarding him:

> Profoundly versed in the sciences, and taught by the study of history and the dire experience of his own day, Abdallah, the son of Maimun, had sufficient opportunity to percieve [*sic*] the risk of declaring open war against the established religion and reigning dynasty, so long as the conscience of the people, and the military power stood at their command. He determined, therefore, by a deeply laid plan, to undermine in secret, that which he dared not attack openly. His system was to be enveloped in a veil of mystery, nor was it to appear in the face of day, until it had succeeded in placing the sovereignty in the hands of its partisans. . . .
>
> The last degree inculcated the vanity of all religion,—*the indifference of actions*, which, according to him, are neither visited with recompense or chastisement, here or hereafter. This alone is the path of truth and right, all the rest imposture and error.[156]

There is nothing much finer in the later so-celebrated letters addressed by Shelley to Peacock than the following natural

[156] *History of the Assassins.* pp. 28–9 (Italics are my own.) Coleridge was also attracted by the story of this Moslem tribe. In the *Times Literary Supplement* for March 9, 1922, it was shown that the source of *Kubla Khan* was Purchas' account of the "paradise" of the "Old Man of the Mountains"—chief of the Assassins.

description,[157] probably of the valley in which Brunnen lies:

> The mountains . . . had been divided to their base to form this happy valley; on every side their icy summits darted their white pinnacles into the clear blue sky, imaging in their grotesque outline, minarets, and ruined domes, and columns worn with time. Far below, the silver clouds rolled their bright volumes in many beautiful shapes, and fed the eternal springs, that, spanning the dark chasm like a thousand radiant rainbows, leaped into the quiet vale, then, lingering in many a dark glade among the groves . . . lost themselves in the lake. The immensity of these precipitous mountains with their starry pyramids of snow, excluded the sun, which overtopped not, even in its meridian, their overhanging rocks. But a more heavenly and serener light was reflected from their icy mirrors which, piercing through the many-tinted clouds, produced lights and colours of inexhaustible variety. The herbage was perpetually verdant, and clothed the darkest recesses of the caverns and the woods.

Nature had here lavished with unstinted hand those rare beauties of form and color upon which the assassins of Shelley's conception, "men who idolized nature and the God of nature" fed while others were content with base superstitions and low desires. We feel as we read that Shelley, though he is talking about this forgotten sect of the eleventh century is all the while thrilling to express not their mind but his own mental and spiritual rebirth among the Alpine solitudes; far from those who hated him or scorned him; secure in the affection of one who had but lately given herself wholly to him, for weal or woe, come time, come tide; and in that natural wonderland he has a new vision of

> Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
> Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms

[157] *Prose Works*, ii. 224.

> Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
> From earth's materials.[158]

From this moment, fired with the impulse "to love and be beloved" by that Beauty that is behind all earthly beauty, he begins to live for the attainment of It. Within a few years the quest becomes the burden of *Alastor, The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,* and *Epipsychidion.* "Alas! that these visitings of the spirit of life should fluctuate and pass away!" he cries; for in the deep joy he felt in the midst of unspoiled Nature, he was conscious of the infusion of the Divine (his phrase is, "the benignant Spirit") in his own soul's life; and would have had this remain with him forever. In the *Essay on Christianity* he says: "This is Heaven, when pain and evil cease, and when the Benignant Principle, untrammelled and uncontrolled, visits in the fulness of its power the universal frame of things." [159]

But discomforts of life in the Château, and a rapidly decreasing store of funds, roused Shelley from contemplation of an earthly paradise; and on the morning of August 27th, abandoning a property previously leased for six months' time from August 25, they were being rowed to the west, on the first stage of their return journey to England. The story of the considerations which led to this sudden step, and to the mode of travel now adopted, are set forth in full in the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour:*

> The £28 which we possessed, was all the money that we could count upon with any certainty, until the following December. S[helley]'s presence was absolutely necessary for the procuring any further supply. What were we to do? we should soon be reduced to absolute want.

[158] Wordsworth, *Recluse,* I. i. 795–8.
[159] In *Shelley Memorials,* ed. 1859. p. 266.

Thus, after balancing the various topics that offered themselves for discussion, we resolved to return . . . to England.

Having formed this resolution, we had not a moment for delay: our little store was sensibly decreasing, and £28 could hardly appear sufficient for so long a journey. It had cost us sixty to cross France from Paris to Neufchatel; but we now resolved on a more economical mode of travelling. Water conveyances are always cheapest, and fortunately we were so situated, that by taking advantage of the rivers of the Reuss and Rhine, we could reach England without travelling a league on land. This was our plan; we should travel eight hundred miles, and was this possible for so small a sum? but there was no other alternative.[160]

Landing at Lucerne, and spending a night there, they proceeded in the *diligence par eau* on the river Reuss to Lauffenburg.[161] Sleeping at Dettingen they arrived the next morning at their destination where, obtaining a "canoe," they continued their journey in it to Mumph. Their frail boat "consisted merely of straight pieces of deal board, unpainted, and nailed together with so little care, that the water constantly poured in at the crevices, and the boat perpetually required emptying." Yet they landed safely at Mumph; and there, being unable to secure a boat, caught a cabriolet returning to Rheinfelden. But about a league out of Mumph the conveyance broke down; and with their heavy box to transport they must have been stranded in the road for a considerable time had not some discharged Swiss soldiers, bound for Rheinfelden, undertaken to carry it there for them. A mile beyond the town they procured a boat for Bâle, "and proceeded down a swift river, while evening came on, and the air was bleak and comfortless." This last is the reading of the

[160] ed. 1817. pp. 53–5.

[161] "Loffenburgh" in the *Six Weeks' Tour*.

Six Weeks' Tour, but one remembers the Preface to *Laon and Cythna:*

I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains.

On the evening of the 29th they were at Bâle. The next day—being the anniversary of Mary's birth—they proceeded by boat to a point named in the journal as either "Shauphane" or "Thauphane" but as yet unidentified. Here they spent the night. Changing again to a canoe, they passed Strasburgh, and soon thereafter as navigation became dangerous transferred to the *diligence par eau.* During the latter stages of the voyage the boat because of contrary winds was obliged to hug the shore.

The course of the Rhine below Mayence becomes much more picturesque. The river descends rapidly, and winds between hills, not high, but steep, and of beautiful forms. We saw many ruined castles standing on the edges of precipices, surrounded by black woods, high and in variegated landscape. In one spot you view rugged hills, ruined castles overlooking tremendous precipices, with the dark Rhine rushing beneath; and, on the sudden turn of a promontory, flourishing vineyards, with green sloping banks, and a meandering river, and populous towns occupy the scene.[162]

One week after their departure from Bâle, they were at Cologne, which to the travellers appeared "an immense town" as they hunted through it for a lodging for the night.

By a curious error of chronology, Mary asserted, in the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*, that as they were now beginning to pass through country celebrated in the third canto

[162] *Frankenstein*, 1818. ch. xviii.

of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, they "read these verses with delight, as they conjured before us these lovely scenes with the truth and vividness of painting, and with the exquisite addition of glowing language and warm imagination." [163] But as Byron did not begin to write the third canto of his famous poem until May 1816, the Shelley party could not have read it two years earlier on their return journey to England. This particular canto, on the other hand, was brought to completion in June 1816, while the same trio were in the daily company of Byron in Switzerland, and was transcribed for Byron by Claire. Mary's error can therefore be excused as growing out of a personal interest and enthusiasm which she and Shelley and Claire must have felt for the poem because they had seen it grow beneath the hand of their friend, its author.

Taking the diligence, "clumsy and comfortless," next morning, they advanced toward Cleves with what seemed to be preternatural slowness, but at length drew up in that city after having travelled continuously for a day and a night, and half of another day, with little sleep or food to make the journey tolerable. Weary of diligences, the party changed at Cleves, to a post-chaise which drew them over the sandy roads of Holland through a flat countryside whose monotony was relieved only by the turf fortifications surrounding the towns, and by an occasional windmill. "One of the latter," said Mary, "was so situated with regard to the road, that it was only by keeping close to the opposite side, and passing quickly, that we could avoid the sweep of its sails." [164]

Rotterdam they found "remarkably clean" and attractive;

[163] Ed. 1817. p. 68.
[164] *History of a Six Weeks' Tour.* p. 76.

and they spent one day here. On the evening of the 9th of September they embarked from this city and after a delay due to contrary winds of two days at Maasluys, where they went bankrupt, the vessel again took them up and landed them, tired but happy, at Gravesend on the 13th.

CHAPTER X

LONDON: BISHOPGATE

Trip up the Thames—Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude—Godwin in Trouble.

OTHER considerations aside, it was a good thing that Shelley had had his outing and change of scene in France and Switzerland, especially during the late summer days of 1814; for all of his strength of mind and body was needed to help him through the terrific struggle with poverty, flights from creditors, and hagglings with avaricious money-lenders, into which he was plunged on his return, a penniless prodigal, to London in the middle of September. Worse than being without means is the being without them as the day of payment of some former pledge draws near; and Shelley in the succeeding weeks watched the approach of winter with fear and dread. For in relieving Godwin of one bill of indebtedness amounting to £200 he had earlier engaged to pay off that sum on the first of December 1814. In a manner incomprehensible to many men, Shelley appealed for aid in this situation to his deserted wife, Harriet; and accepted £20 from her on the occasion.

Of course this slight sum was soon exhausted; and Shelley became the prey of the bailiffs. All through the long winter, until the death of Sir Bysshe Shelley in January, which was followed by the making of a substantial provision for Percy Bysshe, the poet trembled in the shadow of debtor's prison, and was obliged for his own and her sake to live in hiding and apart from Mary, who remained in their new lodgings

at Mrs. Page's, Church Street, St. Pancras, lest the hounds of the law should scent him out and bring him for his indebtedness to Coldbath Fields or Surrey Prison. Cut off from any but clandestine intercourse with his friends, he was also barred from the Skinner Street bookshop by Godwin and his wife, who had not yet forgiven him for the offence of his elopement with Mary and Claire. In Mary's novel, *The Last Man*, these circumstances appear to be glanced at in an episode, perhaps precipitated by one of Shelley's letters to Mrs. Godwin and by her reply.

Adrian wrote a brief note to his mother, informing her that Idris was under his care and guardianship. Several days elapsed, and at last an answer came, dated from Cologne. "It was useless," the haughty and disappointed lady wrote, "for the Earl of Windsor and his sister to address again the injured parent, whose only expectation of tranquillity must be derived from oblivion of their existence. Her desires had been blasted, her schemes overthrown. She did not complain; in her brother's court she would find, not compensation for their disobedience (filial unkindness admitted of none), but such a state of things and mode of life, as might best reconcile her to her fate. Under such circumstances, she positively declined any communication with them.[1]

No doubt Godwin was deeply humiliated by the failure of discipline in his own household, and more by an evil rumor afloat about this time which charged that he had sold the two

[1] *The Last Man*, i. 184. To relate this to the actual situation in 1814, make the following changes: for *Adrian* read *Shelley;* for *his mother* read *Claire's mother;* for *Idris* read *Claire;* for *dated from Cologne* read *addressed to Cologne;* for *Earl of Windsor* read *Shelley;* for *his sister* read *Claire;* for *court* read *companionship*. Charles Clairmont, brother of Claire, was at this time a familiar of the Skinner Street household, and acted to some extent this part of a go-between in the negotiations between Shelley, Mary, and Claire, on the one hand, and the Godwins on the other.

girls to Shelley—Mary for £800, and Claire for £700. Curiously enough, it was Harriet Shelley who communicated the fact to Godwin that such scandal was abroad; but she assured the embarrassed philosopher that she did not believe the story, and had done her best to discredit it.[2] Fanny Godwin, returning from a visit to her aunts in Dublin, now first learned of the flight of Mary and Claire, and (Mrs. Godwin says) could not "get over it." [3] Probably Fanny had from this time to endure the reproaches of Claire's disappointed mother; and her situation in the home in which she had no blood relative must have grown increasingly lonely. In the July succeeding we hear that she "continues to be melancholy"; [4] and in October 1816—but this is anticipating.

Of the fear and love contending for empire over Shelley and Mary in these troubled days there is abundant record in the letters exchanged by some clandestine method between them. "Meet me to-morrow at three o'clock in St. Paul's," [5] Shelley writes, on October 27th, but later "Meet me at *one* and not at three, at St. Paul's." [6] One remembers Mary's words:

> To modern and protestant England, a cathedral or a church may appear a strange place for private assignations and concealed meetings. It was otherwise in the days of our ancestors, when through similarity of religion, our manners bore a greater resemblance than they now do to those of foreign countries. The churches stood always open.[7]

[2] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ii. 546.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. 546:

[4] *Ibid.* ii. 549.

[5] Ingpen, *Letters*, etc. i. 433.

[6] *Ibid.* i. 440. The second note must have been written on October 27 or 28, being logically connected with the letter setting the appointment at three o'clock.

[7] *Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*, i. 100–1.

Although some needless effort has been expended [8] by Professor Dowden in an attempt to saddle the obligation on Harriet Shelley, it is now perfectly clear that it was a bill owing to Thomas Charters, coachmaker, of Bond Street, for the construction of the private carriage already described, which brought additional menaces about Shelley's ears at this time. One attempt to stave off Charters' demands is recorded in an unpublished and undated letter of Shelley's to G. B. Ballachey, a money-lender and partner in the firm of Ballachey and Bridges, as follows:

Dear Sir

Will you have the goodness to send Mr. Thomas Hookham Jun^r. No 15 Old Bond Street, £100 & the bill for 100 [*sic*] drawn in favour of Charters. Charters has made sum [*sic*] objections, but I doubt not that Mr. H. calling on him with the money would effectually overrule them

Dear Sir your obliged servant
P. B. Shelley.

[addressed outside]:
G. B. Ballachey Esq^r.[9]

From a number of references in two published letters of November 3 and 4, 1814,[10] I think it likely that this letter to Ballachey should be assigned to one of these two days. Hogg has left an amusing account of how he was himself arrested in error by two bailiffs sent to take Shelley into custody for this debt.[11] But the bill, in spite of these negotiations and arrests, went unpaid until at least 1844, when Charters addressed Peacock, Shelley's executor, on the subject of the

[8] *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 488, note.
[9] From the original holograph letter.
[10] Ingpen, *Letters*, i. 438, 440.
[11] Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, ii. 356–8.

obligation, which was for a total sum of £532. 11s. 6d.[12]

The period of Shelley's and Mary's separation was from October 23 to November 9. During that time Shelley was quartered with his friend Peacock in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. "Perhaps," says Peacock, "this winter in London was the most solitary period of Shelley's life. I often passed an evening with him at his lodgings, and I do not recollect ever meeting any one there, excepting Mr. Hogg. Some of his few friends of the preceding year had certainly at that time fallen from him." [13]

Among those who had fallen away may be mentioned Mrs. Boinville,[14] Thomas Hookham,[15] and perhaps also the Newtons.[16] Even Hogg was at first cool, but on November 14 called on Shelley, who had taken lodgings in Nelson Square. He "was pleased with Mary"; and after a time Mary reciprocated his kindly feeling. "I like him better each time" she wrote in the *Journal* for Saturday, December 24. For the first time since the unhappy events at York in the autumn of 1811, Hogg now renewed his intimacy with Shelley on terms similar to those which had obtained in their undergraduate days at Oxford.

Reunited to Mary, Shelley was of necessity also again caught up into companionship with Claire, who, silly, impulsive, wilful, and sentimental to a degree, still clung to the young lovers and was to continue to do so with but slight in-

[12] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*, Appendix. p. 638.

[13] *Works*, iii. 420–1.

[14] Mary wrote in the Journal on October 11 that they had just received a "cold and even sarcastic" letter from Mrs. Boinville. Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*. i. 92.

[15] Cf. Shelley's *Letters*, I. 429, 431. But by October 30 Hookham was befriending Shelley. Cf. Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 498.

[16] "the Newtons were either absent or held aloof." Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. i. 466–7.

termission to the very end of Shelley's life. One incident of these autumn evenings must be given *verbatim* as it stands in Shelley's *Journal*. The account is substantiated at every point by that in Claire's *Journal*.

October 7. 1814.—At one o'clock Shelley observes that it is the witching time of night; he inquires soon after if it is not horrible to feel the silence of night tingling in our ears; in half an hour the question is repeated in a different form; at two they retire awe-struck, and hardly daring to breathe. Shelley says to Jane, "Good-night"; his hand is leaning on the table; he is conscious of an expression in his countenance which he cannot repress. Jane hesitates. "Good night" again. She still hesitates.

"Did you ever read the tragedy of Orra?" said Shelley. "Yes." "How horribly you look!—take your eyes off." "Good night" again, and Jane ran to her room. Shelley, unable to sleep, kissed Mary, and prepared to sit beside her, and read until morning, when rapid footsteps descended the stairs. Jane was there; her countenance was distorted most unnaturally by horrible dismay—it beamed with a whiteness that seemed almost like light . . . She told me that a pillow placed upon her bed had been removed, in the moment that she turned her eyes away, to a chair at some distance, and evidently by no human power. . . . We continued to sit by the fire, at intervals engaged in awful conversation relative to the nature of these mysteries. . . . Just as the dawn was struggling with moonlight, Jane remarked in me that unutterable expression [17] which had affected her with so much horror before; she described it as expressing a mixture of deep sadness and conscious power over her. I covered my face with my hands, and spoke to her in the most studied gentleness. It was ineffectual; her horror and agony increased to the most dreadful convulsions. She shrieked and writhed on the floor.[18]

[17] "As I have intimated, he took a pleasure in frightening me." says Thornton Hunt; and he speaks also of "the fantastic aspects that he delighted to assume." *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1863. p. 137.

[18] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 480–2.

On the 14th of the month Shelley confided to the pages of his *Journal* as to:

. . . Jane's insensibility and incapacity for the slightest degree of friendship. The feelings occasioned by this discovery prevent me from maintaining any measure in security. This highly incorrect; subversion of the first principles of true philosophy; characters, particularly those which are unformed, may change. Beware of weakly giving away to trivial sympathies. Content yourself with one great affection—with a single mighty hope; let the rest of mankind be the subject of your benevolence, your justice, and, as human beings, of your sensibility; but, as you value many hours of peace, never suffer more than one even to approach the hallowed circle.[19]

That Mary felt that Claire was spending more time in Shelley's company than was warranted is apparent from numerous entries in her *Journal;* e. g. "Tuesday, December 6.—Very unwell. Shelley and Clara walk out, as usual, to heaps of places." [20] Many years later Mary begged her daughter-in-law not to leave her alone with Claire, for, said Mary, "she has been the bane of my life since I was three years old!" [21]

On November 30, at 9 o'clock in the evening, there was born to the unhappy Harriet Shelley the second child of her union with Shelley—a boy, later christened Charles Bysshe.[22] The event was announced, a week later, to Shelley in letters from Hookham and Harriet. In a tone which seems to the dispassionate reader needlessly cruel, Mary says: "Shelley writes a number of circular letters of this event, which ought to be ushered in with ringing of bells, etc., for it is *the son of*

[19] Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* i. 93.
[20] *Ibid.* i. 100.
[21] *Ibid.* ii. 312.
[22] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* i. 465.

his wife.—A letter from Harriet confirming the news, in a letter from a *deserted wife!!* and telling us he has been born a week." [23] This is Mary's cold-blooded version of that event. Listen to Harriet Shelley (she is writing to her loyal Irish friend, Catherine Nugent): "Oh my dear friend what a dreadful trial it is to bring children into the world—with no kind father's care to heal the wounded frame.—I have seen his father [i. e., Charles Bysshe's]: he came to see me as soon as he knew of the event; but as to his tenderness for me, none remains. He said he was glad it was a boy, because he would make money cheaper. You see how that noble soul is debased. Money now, and not philosophy, is the grand spring of his actions." [24] Harriet's son, always a delicate child, lived for twelve years, and died of consumption in 1826.[25]

But in spite of their precarious situation in this year, Shelley's and Mary's studies went on. Their reading list for 1814, taken from Mary's manuscript, shows that their average was better than "a book a week."

MARY

(*Those marked* * *Shelley has read also.*)

* *Letters from Norway* [by Mary Wollstonecraft].
* *Mary: a Fiction* [by Mary Wollstonecraft].
* *Wordsworth's Excursion.*[26]
* *Madoc* [by Southey.] 2 vols.
* *Curse of Kehama* [by Robert Southey].

[23] Marshall, *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 100.

[24] Letter, Dec. 11, 1814. *Letters from Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* pp. 60–1.

[25] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*, pp. 513–14.

[26] "Shelley . . . brings home Wordsworth's *Excursion*, of which we read a part, much disappointed. He is a slave." Mary's *Journal.* Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 80–1.

* *Sorcerer*, a Novel.
* *Political Justice*, 2 vols. [by William Godwin].
* *The Monk*, by Lewis, 4 vols.
* *Thalaba*, 2 vols. [by Robert Southey].
* *The Empire of the Nairs* [by Sir James Lawrence].
* *St. Godwin* [a parody on Godwin's St. Leon].
* *Wrongs of Woman*, 2 vols. [by Mary Wollstonecraft].
Caleb Williams, 3 vols. [by Godwin]
* *Zadig*.
* *Life of Alfieri*, by himself, 2 vols.
* *Essay on Sepulchres* [by Godwin].
* Louvet's *Memoirs*.
Carnot's *Memorial*.
* *Lives of the Revolutionists*, by Adolphus, 2 vols.
* *Edgar Huntly*, 3 vols. by [Charles Brockden] Brown.
* *Peregrine Proteus*, 2 vols. [by Wieland].
* *The Italian*, 3 vols. [by Anne Radcliffe].
* *Prince Alexy Haimatoff* [by Thomas Jefferson Hogg].
Philip Stanley, by Charles Brockden Brown.
Miss Joanna Baillie's *Plays*.
* Moore's *Journal* [i. e. Dr. John Moore's].
* *Agathon* [by Wieland].
* Mungo Park's *Travels in Africa*, 1st Part.
* Barrow's *Embassy to China*.
Milton's *Letter to Mr. Hartlib*.
Emilia Galotti [Lessing's.]
* Bryan Edward's *History of the West Indies*.
* *View of the French Revolution*, by M[ary] W[ollstonecraft] G[odwin].
* *Candide*.
* [*Poems* of] Kirke White.

62 volumes.

SHELLEY

Diogenes Laertius. Cicero: *Collectanea*.

Petronius Suetonius.

60 volumes.[27]

The death of the aged Sir Bysshe Shelley on the 5th of January 1815 brought the poet's father Timothy to the baronetcy and opened the way for his son to obtain an adequate and regular income from the Shelley estates. Accordingly, as soon as this could be arranged, Shelley agreed to sell to his father his reversionary interest under the will of John Shelley, brother of Sir Bysshe, "in consideration of his father paying him the sum of £7400 and covenanting to pay him an annuity of £1000 during their joint lives.[28] This being agreed to in June 1815, Shelley increased his wife's income [29] to £400 by instructing his bankers to pay over to her in quarterly instalments £200 a year. He also sent Harriet at this time £200 additional to enable her to meet certain outstanding obligations.

On or before February 22nd there had been born to Mary and Shelley a seven-months' child, a daughter who, from birth, displayed inherent weakness which terminated in death on the sixth of March. The loss of her first-born was a deep grief to Mary. To her *Journal* on March 9th she confided her sorrow. "Read and talk," she writes. "Still think about my little baby. 'Tis hard, indeed, for a mother to lose a child." Again, in the *Journal* for March 13, we read: "Shelley and Clara go to town. Stay at home, net, and think of my little dead baby. This is foolish, I suppose; yet, whenever I am left alone to my own thoughts, and do not read to divert them, they always come back to the same point—that I was

[27] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 505–6.
[28] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*, p. 454.
[29] Harriet was already receiving £200 per annum from her father.

a mother, and am so no longer." On the 19th a dream reminds her of her loss. "Dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire, and it lived. Awake and find no baby. I think about the little thing all day. Not in good spirits." The dream was repeated on the next night.

Other cares, too, the convalescent mother had to bear. Shelley's health was ailing; and after recurring references to the fact in the *Journal* during February there comes the entry on the 28th of that month: "Shelley goes to Pemberton about his health." On March 14 Shelley again called on the physician. Mary had also to worry about the state of the household in Skinner Street, from which emanated plans and counter-plans for meeting increasing obligations, avoiding arrest for debt, with wild plans to emigrate to America as the means, and all the time Godwin too proud to speak with Shelley or to hold epistolary intercourse with him, yet looking hopefully toward the beloved of his daughter for extrication from debts aggregating no less than £5000.[30]

But if Godwin would not speak to Shelley it was not so easy for the women of the household to continue this rigid policy of ostracism. Even Charles Lamb's "damn'd disagreeable,"[31] "pitiful artificial,"[32] "hated ONE WOMAN"[33] was unable to let the birth of the baby pass without sending linen to Mary; and Fanny from this time became, whether with or without sanction from the Godwins, a frequent caller at the rooms in Nelson Square.

[30] The journal entries cited are from Mrs. Marshall's *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*. i. 107 ff.

[31] *Letters of Charles Lamb*. ed. Lucas i. 241.

[32] *Ibid*. i. 252

[33] *Ibid*. i. 418. All the references are to Mrs. Godwin.

The studies of Shelley and Mary, of whose extent and variety the list of works just given is a good index, continued without abatement through all the trials of the spring of 1815. Livy, Ovid, and Seneca; Sir Thomas Browne, Gibbon, and Fontenelle; Spenser, Wordsworth, and Scott, and many others were scanned during these days, regularly and thoughtfully.

INTERCHAPTER V

A New Poem: Ballad—Young Parson Richards

But Shelley was also reading in the book of Man. The winter of 1814–1815 was like many immediately after under the shadow of the Napoleonic conflict, a time of great suffering in and about the metropolis. Perhaps the characters who figure in the unpublished ballad, now about to be presented, were known to Shelley through a newspaper account, or hearsay. How he got the story, if it sprang from actual incidents, we shall probably never know. He may have invented it out of whole cloth. It does not greatly matter how he got it, perhaps, for it is devoid of the highest poetic qualities and if Shelley had not written it, it would have no interest for us now, but because he wrote it it does concern us, for it shows the breadth of his charity, the liveliness of his regard for the unfortunate.

In publishing it from the Shelley Notebook bequeathed by Edward A. Silsbee to Harvard University Library and by the leave of Dr. William C. Lane, Librarian, it should be stated that the existence of the ballad was noted by Professor George Edward Woodberry when he edited this Notebook in the Harvard University Library Bibliographical Contributions, numbers thirty and thirty-five, but that he rejected it from his own centenary edition of Shelley's Poetical Works, probably on the ground which he had stated in the Contributions because he thought that the poem was "entirely valueless in

itself and uninstructive with respect either to Shelley or to the growth of his poetical genius."

The theme of the ballad, though perhaps too frank for the literary taste of America and England in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is certainly not more daring than that of *Laon and Cythna* or *The Cenci;* and of Shelley's sympathy for many a Magdalen of real life in his own day we have abundant evidence from one of his contemporaries. In his *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries,* Leigh Hunt tells this story:

> Shelley was present at a ball, where he was a person of some importance. Numerous village ladies were there, old and young. . . . It was expected that the young squire would take out one of these ladies to dance;

but instead Shelley was seen

> handing forth, with an air of consolation and tenderness, the object of all the virtuous scorn of the room!

And we are also indebted to Hunt for the narrative of Shelley's encounter with an unfortunate woman whom, on a desolate winter night, he found lying on Hampstead Heath; of his appeal to some passing householder to shelter her until a physician could be called; of the householder's amazed refusal; and of Shelley's burning words in reply:

> It is such men as you who madden the spirits and the patience of the poor and wretched; and if ever a convulsion comes in this country (which is very probable) recollect what I tell you; . . . you will have your house, that you refuse to put this miserable woman into, burnt over your head.

The thirteenth stanza contains an obvious reminiscence of Hamlet's proud speech to Laertes:

> A ministering angel shall thy sister be,
> When thou liest howling;

a speech echoed earlier, in Shelley's work, in the ninth chapter of *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian*, where, addressing the hapless Eloise, who has been seduced by Nempere, Shelley says:

> Ah! poor deluded Eloise . . . he may howl with the fiends of darkness, in never-ending misery, whilst thou shalt receive, at the throne of the God whom thou hast loved, the rewards of . . . unsuspecting excellence.

And the protest, in the fifteenth stanza, against the belief that a beneficent Deity could doom millions of his creatures to eternal punishment, is one frequently encountered in Shelley's works, notably in the essay *On the Devil and Devils*, and *On Christianity* (1815).

The thought of the first two lines of the twelfth stanza, that God "meant this for a world of love" recalls Shelley's statement at the end of the preface to *Laon and Cythna* (1817): "Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world"; and his objection, in the seventeenth stanza, that though God had intended that his creatures should increase and multiply, their earthly tyrants would doom them to death, is closely related to his protest, in the *Philosophical View of Reform* (1819–20) against the current theory of certain political economists, that the poor should cease to procreate.

In the notebook, from which the poem is taken, we find

poems of Shelley known to have been done during 1819 and 1820; and perhaps this ballad was conceived at this time; but, stylistically, it seems to me that it belongs to a much earlier period. If this is the case, then the Harvard manuscript version would not be the first, but a later draft. The number of alterations in the manuscript, which is unusually small for a Shelley first draft, tallies with this theory. Everyone knows Trelawny's famous description of a Shelley first draft (Trelawny referred specifically to that of the *Lines, with a Guitar*) as more closely resembling a sketch of a duck pond, than a version of a poem.

Relying, then, wholly upon internal evidence, it would appear to me that this ballad must have been produced before 1816, about which time Shelley's manner, partly as the result of his awakened interest in the Greek and Latin classics, underwent a marked change. And I am inclined to think that if we assign it to the year 1815 we shall not be wide of the mark.

A BALLAD

Young Parson Richards stood at his gate
Feeding his hound with bread;
Hunch after hunch, the mere beast ate
Moving his tail & his head.

A woman came up with a babe at her breast
Which was flaccid with toil & hunger—
She cried . . . "Give me food or give me rest
We die if I wait much longer. . . .

"The poor thing sucks & no milk will come
He would cry, but his strength is gone,

This wasting weakness has left him dumb—
Ye can hardly hear him moan

"The skin round his eyes is pale & blue . . .
His eyes are glazed . . . not with tears . . .
I wish for a little moment that you
Could know what a mother fears.

"Give me a piece of that fine white bread
I would give you some blood for it . . .
Before I faint & my infant is dead—
O give me a little bit

"Alas it was sold, that trinket of gold
Which my ruiner gave to me . . .
All the winter night on my bosom, as cold
It lay, as his heart might be,

"And the single blanket of threadbare woof
Under which we both cried to sleep
Is gone . . . the rain drenches us through the roof
And I moan, but no longer weep

"What would it avail me to prostitute
This lean body squalid & wild? . . .
And yet by the God, who made me I'd do't
If I could but save my child

"Perhaps you would like . . . but alas you are
A staid & a holy man, . . .
But if you were not . . . would any one care
For these limbs so meagre & wan . . .

"Aye, aye, . . . one as rich & as grave as you
Once found them a dear delight, . . .

I scarce think he would be as cruel now
If he saw them in this sad plight

"Give me bread . . . my hot bowels gnaw . . .
I'll tear down the garden gate
I'll fight with the dog, . . . I'll tear from his maw
The crust which he just has ate . . .

"Priest, consider that God who created us
Meant this for a world of love . . .
Remember the story of Lazarus,
You preach to the people of . . .

"And upon my soul I begin to think
'Twere a joy beyond all pleasure
To sit up in Heaven, & see you drink
In Hell, of your own bad measure . . .

"Will you say God said this to frighten the rich
He will only damn the poor;
That the deadly sins are alone those which
There are many temptations for. . . .

"Nor doubt, the great Power has made us each
Such as we were to be . . .
And then to damn us; . . . the thing w[oul]d impeach
His justice & charity

"And yet I cannot imagine how we
Can call *him* just & good;
When he sends a wretched woman like me
To a man, like you, for food.

"O God! this poor dear child did I
At thy command bear & cherish . . .

Thou bad'st us increase & multiply . . .
And our tyrants bid us perish, . . .

"Water! water! & bread & beer!
A little morsel of bread! . . .
My own dear baby is dying I fear! . . .
And I . . . I hope . . . am dead."

The man of God with a surly frown
To the garden wicket paced
And he saw the woman had fallen down
With her face below her waist.

The child lay stiff as a frozen straw
In the woman's white cold breast . . .
And the parson in its dead features saw
His own to the truth expressed

He turned from the bosom whose heart was broke
Once it pillowed him as he slept. . . .
He turned from the lips that no longer spoke
From the eyes that no longer wept. . . .[33a]

[33a] This discussion of *Young Parson Richards* is reprinted from an article by the present writer in *Philological Quarterly*. March, 1926.

CHAPTER X

(CONTINUED)

BY the 28th of May Mary and Shelley were fortunate enough to be freed from the trying companionship of the trouble-making third, Claire Clairmont. In her *Journal* for March 11 Mary had written: "Talk about Clara's going away; nothing settled; I fear it is hopeless. She will not go to Skinner Street; then our house is the only remaining place, I see plainly. What is to be done?" The next day Mary reported herself "Very quiet all the morning, and happy, for Clara did not get up till 4." On the 14th of the month Mary puts down the fact that "Shelley and I go upstairs and talk of Clara's going; the prospect appears to me more dismal than ever, not the least hope. This is, indeed, hard to bear." A plan to get Claire to take up quarters with a Mrs. Knapp failed because Claire thought her "forward, impertinent, superficial." At length, however, lodgings were secured for her at the little village where Shelley had tarried for a season with Harriet three years before—in Lynmouth, near Barnstaple, in North Devon. From her new address Claire wrote a letter to Fanny voicing her extreme pleasure in the calm of Lynmouth after the turbulence in which she said she had been living hitherto.

Funded, by the arrangement concluded in June with his father, Shelley set out through Devon in July to find a suitable house for himself and Mary. The hunt for quarters went on, however, for some days while Mary, who was at

From a contemporary lithograph

Shelley wrote to Peacock from Italy that he would like to settle down "forever" in such a setting as that of Virginia Water.

Clifton, bore with what patience she could this separation from her lover. But at last her endurance gave way, and in a letter of July 27, 1815, she urged upon Shelley to send for her that they might together prosecute the search for suitable quarters. "Pray, is Clara with you?" she queried, in a revealing moment, "for I have inquired several times, and no letters; but, seriously, it would not in the least surprise me, (if you have written to her from London, and let her know that you are without me) that she should have taken some such freak." [34] Thus the thought of Claire continued to haunt Mary's mind and prey upon her happiness.

"In the summer of 1815," wrote Peacock, "Shelley took a furnished house at Bishopgate, the eastern entrance of Windsor [Great] Park, where he resided till the summer of 1816." [35] The countryside in which they now dwelt for a season has been vividly described by Mary in *The Last Man:*

> I had never been in the neighborhood of Windsor; the fertility and beauty of the country around now struck me with admiration, which encreased [*sic*] as I approached the antique wood. The ruins of majestic oaks which had grown, flourished, and decayed during the progress of centuries, marked where the limits of the forest once reached, while the shattered palings and neglected underwood showed that this part was deserted for the younger plantations, which owed their birth to the beginning of the nineteenth century [the novel opens in 2075 A. D.]. Perdita's [36] humble dwelling was situated on the skirts of the most ancient portion; before it stretched Bishopgate Heath, which towards the east appeared interminable, and was bounded to the west by Chapel Wood and the grove of Virginia Water. Behind, the cottage was shadowed by venerable fathers of

[34] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* i. 524.
[35] Peacock, *Works,* iii. 422.
[36] i. e. Mary Shelley's.

the forest, under which the deer came to graze, and which for the most part hollow and decayed, formed fantastic groups that contrasted with the regular beauty of the younger trees. These, the offspring of a later period, stood erect and seemed ready to advance fearlessly into coming time; while those outworn stragglers blasted and broke, clung to each other, their weak boughs sighing as the wind buffeted them—a weather-beaten crew.[37]

A light railing surrounded the garden of the cottage, which, low-roofed, seemed to submit to the majesty of nature, and cower amidst the venerable remains of forgotten time. Flowers, the children of the spring, adorned her garden and casements; in the midst of lowliness there was an air of elegance which spoke the taste of the inmate.[38]

Now at last Shelley, who even at Bracknell sailed his paper-boats and went navigating in wash-tubs, had his opportunity to indulge his love of boating to the full. Says Mary:

There was a glade—a grassy opening in the wood; the retiring trees left its velvet expanse as a temple for love; the silver Thames bounded it on one side, and a willow bending down dipt in the water its Naiad hair, dishevelled by the wind's viewless hand. The oaks around were the home of a tribe of nightingales—there am I now; Idris, in youth's dear prime, is by my side—remember, I am just twenty-two, and seventeen summers have scarcely passed over the beloved of my heart. The river swollen by autumnal rains, deluged the low lands, and Adrian [39] in his favorite boat is employed in the dangerous pastime of plucking the topmost bough from a submerged oak. Are you weary of life, O Adrian, that you thus play with danger?—

He has obtained his prize, and he pilots his boat through the flood;

[37] Cf. Shelley, *Orpheus*, II, 31–4.

[38] *The Last Man*, i. 74–6. Another description of the same scene introduces Mary's short story of *The Mourner*. *Tales and Stories of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, pp. 83–5.

[39] i. e., Shelley.

our eyes were fixed on him fearfully, but the stream carried him away from us; he was forced to land far lower down, and to make a considerable circuit before he could join us.[40]

Sometimes we passed whole days under the leafy covert of the forest with our books and music. This occurred during those rare days in this country, when the sun mounts his etherial throne in unclouded majesty, and the windless atmosphere is as a bath of pellucid and grateful water, wrapping the senses in tranquillity. When the clouds veiled the sky, and the wind scattered them here and there, rending their woof, and strewing its fragments through the aerial plains—then we rode out, and sought new spots of beauty and repose. When the frequent rains shut us within doors, evening recreation followed morning study, ushered in by music and song.—Then were we as gay as summer insects, playful as children; we ever met one another with smiles, and read content and joy in each other's countenances.[41]

At other times we made excursions of many days' duration, and crossed the country to visit any spot noted for beauty or historical association. Sometimes we went up to London, and entered into the amusements of the busy throng; sometimes our retreat was invaded by visitors from among them. This change made us only the more sensible to the delights of the intimate intercourse of our own circle, the tranquillity of our divine forest.[42]

Adrian, the matchless brother of my soul, the sensitive and excellent Adrian, loving all, and beloved by all, yet seemed destined not to find the half of himself, which was to complete his happiness. He often left us, and wandered by himself in the woods, or sailed in his little skiff, his books his only companions.[43]

Each month brought forth its successor;—truly our lives were a living comment on that beautiful sentiment of Plutarch, that "our souls have a natural inclination to love, being born as much to love,

[40] *The Last Man*, i. 165–6.
[41] *Ibid*, i. 186–7.
[42] *Ibid*. i. 188–9.
[43] *Ibid*. i. 189.

as to feel, to reason, to understand and remember." We talked of change and active pursuits, but still remained at Windsor, incapable of violating the charm that attached us to our secluded life.[44]

"At the end of August 1815," says Peacock, "we made an excursion on the Thames to Lechlade, in Gloucestershire, and as much higher as there was water to float our skiff." The party, in addition to Peacock, included Shelley and Mary and Charles Clairmont, and started from Old Windsor, going forward leisurely past Oxford, where Shelley spent a day revisiting his old haunts, to Lechlade and would have gone further but that weeds and shallows blocked their progress a little way above that town. These forced them to return to spend the night at Lechlade. The result for English literature was the composition in the churchyard at Lechlade of that finest short poem from Shelley's pen before 1816, beginning:

> The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
> Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;
> And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
> In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day; [45]
> Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
> Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.[46]

At the beginning of the ten days' excursion, Peacock reports that Shelley's health was so poor "that he feared being obliged to return." He went to a doctor, but made no gain by his prescription. "He had been living chiefly on tea and bread

[44] *Ibid.* i. 191–2.

[45] Cf. *To Night,* 1, 10, and *Alastor,* 337–9.

[46] *A Summer Evening Churchyard, Lechlade, Gloucestershire,* 11, 1–6. Cf. *Alastor,* 455–6; and *Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck,* iii. 247: "silence and twilight crept up from the sedgy banks of the river."

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

From an aquatint made in 1815, the same year in which Shelley visited the town and wrote *A Summer E[illegible]ing Churchyard* describing this scene.

and butter," writes Peacock. "I told him, if he would allow me to prescribe for him, I would set him to rights. He asked, 'What would be your prescription?' I said, 'Three mutton chops, well peppered.' He said, 'Do you really think so?' I said, 'I am sure of it.' He took the prescription; the success was obvious and immediate. He lived in my way for the rest of the expedition, rowed vigorously, was cheerful, merry, overflowing with animal spirits, and had certainly one week of thorough enjoyment of life." [47] Peacock's verdict as to the beneficial alteration in Shelley's health is confirmed by Charles Clairmont. To Claire he wrote: "We have all felt the good effects of this jaunt, but in Shelley the change is quite remarkable; he has now the ruddy, healthy complexion of the autumn upon his countenance, and he is twice as fat as he used to be." [48] This is Mary's account:

> I was struck by the improvement that appeared in the health of Adrian. He was no longer bent to the ground, like an over-nursed flower of spring, that, shooting up beyond its strength, is weighed down even by its own coronal of blossoms. His eyes were bright, his countenance composed, an air of concentrated energy was diffused over his whole person, much unlike its former languor.[49]

William Whitton, Sir Timothy Shelley's attorney, said, in a letter of November 30, to the baronet that it had been "mentioned" to him on the day preceding, "that Mr. P. B. Shelley was exhibiting himself on the Windsor Stage in the Character [*sic*] of Shakespeare's plays under the figured name of Cooks. I believe that fact is so," concluded Whitton, "and I know of no way [of] correcting such a purpose and bringing him-

[47] *Works*, iii. 422–3.
[48] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 529–30.
[49] *The Last Man*, ii. 189.

self and his conduct in life and principles before the publick than measures of communication with the principal of the Company, whose name, I believe, is Penley, and whom I know a little of from his visiting Camberwell parish annually with his company." [50] Shelley an actor! Shelley, who according to Peacock "had a prejudice against theatres!" [51] The story is difficult to believe chiefly because Peacock, who was in close touch with Shelley at this period, and who discusses Shelley's attitude toward drama and opera at some length, makes no mention whatever of such circumstance. No one, however, who has read the account of Shelley's early attempts at the histrionic in the midst of delighted admirers at Field Place,[52] will be prepared to deny that Shelley had the mimetic impulse that leads to theatricals.

"This winter," says Peacock, "was . . . a mere Atticism. Our studies were exclusively Greek." [53] While these studies were going forward, Shelley's pen was not idle, but was busily engaged in working out the form of the poem, *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*, which he published in March 1816. The title was suggested by Peacock, who explains that "Alastor" means "an evil genius"; and that the poem "treated the spirit of solitude as a spirit of evil." [54] *Alastor* is in fact a double attack on the misanthrope who, spurning human society, endeavors to slake the fever of his spirit in solitude, and the "selfish, blind, and torpid" multitudes "who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep

[50] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*, p. 458.
[51] *Works*, iii. 411.
[52] Cf. Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, i. 8, 19.
[53] *Works*, iii. 423.
[54] *Ibid.* iii. 423.

aloof from sympathies with their kind." [55] Hand in hand with this goes the earliest narrative of that search for ideal Beauty which is so familiar a theme in Shelley's poetry from this time forward. When Shelley wrote *Alastor* he had not reached the wisdom which he conveyed to John Gisborne in a letter of June 1822. Speaking of the *Epipsychidion* he said at that later day: "It is an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal." [56]

[55] Preface to *Alastor*.
[56] *Letters*, ii. 976.

INTERCHAPTER VI

The Sources and Significance of Alastor

Some of the circumstances of *Alastor,* and a part of its mood, go back to Shelley's boyhood romance with Harriet Grove, his walks and talks with her, his grief at the loss of his cousin's affection; his early preoccupation with the subjects of death, ghosts, the grave; his reading of Wordsworth, Southey, and Volney; his visit to Switzerland, and his trip up the Thames; and is colored throughout by the fear of approaching death which arose from his own physical condition, and his physician's view of the hopelessness of his case, in the spring of 1815.

One passage which reveals to us that Shelley had not forgotten the walks and talks in St. Leonard's Forest with his cousin Harriet is the following:

> In lone and silent hours,
> When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
> Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
> Staking his very life on some dark hope,
> Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
> With my most innocent love, until strange tears
> Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
> Such magic as compels the charmèd night
> To render up thy charge. . .[57]

[57] *Alastor,* 29–37.

a description directly related to the earlier lines, well known to have been written at Cwm Elan in 1812 with the memory of Harriet before him:

> They could not in a twilight walk
> Weave an impassioned web of talk,
> Till mysteries the spirits press
> In wild yet tender awfulness.[58]

A letter addressed in the same year to another correspondent gives us the germ of lines nearly related to these in *Alastor*. In the letter Shelley says:

> As to the ghosts, I shall welcome them, although Harriet protests against my invoking them. But they would tell tales of times of old, and it would add to the picturesqueness of the scenery to see their forms flitting through the vaulted charnels.[59]

In *Alastor*, the poet tells us:

> . . . I have made my bed
> In charnels and on coffins, where black death
> Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
> Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
> Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost
> Thy messenger, to render up the tale
> Of what we are.[60]

In a book[61] which he commended to the attention of Miss Hitchener as "the production of a very clever man"[62] Shelley had probably read:

[58] *The Retrospect: Cwm Elan.* 1812, 84–7.
[59] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, Jan. 26, 1812. *Letters*, i. 33.
[60] *Alastor*, 23–9.
[61] George Ensor, *On National Education.* 1811, p. 255.
[62] Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, June 6, 1811. *Letters*, i. 90.

The youth must not be permitted to do anything unkind to his fellows, to servants, to the poor, to bird or beast. Benevolence embraces the whole animated world;

and the idea may have provoked the lines in *Alastor* in which the poet vows:

> . . . no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
> I consciously have injured, but still loved
> And cherished these my kindred [63]

though as Mr. Ackermann suggests,[64] Shelley more probably remembered Wordsworth:

> . . . Birds and beasts,
> And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
> And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
> And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
> The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
> In his capacious mind he loved them all;
> Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.[65]

When the love of this youth who loved all living things was spurned by his cousin, he wrote to his friend Hogg: "She is gone—she is lost to me for ever; for ever!" [66] and again: "She is gone! She is lost to me for ever!" [67] a sentiment expressed in the opening lines of the *Melody to a Scene of Former Times* (1810):

> Art thou indeed forever gone,
> Forever, ever lost to me?

[63] *Alastor*, 13–15.
[64] *Quellen, Verbilder, Stoffe zu Shelley's Poetischen Werken*, p. 3.
[65] *Excursion*, ii. 41–7.
[66] *Letters*, i. 32.
[67] *Ibid.* i. 35.

When Shelley portrays the sorrowful lamentations of the poet who has been deserted by the "veiled maid" of his vision, he causes the forsaken one to exclaim:

> . . . Lost, lost, forever lost,
> In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
> That beautiful shape! [68]

By 1821 Shelley became aware that "The poet and the man are two different natures; though they may exist together, they may be unconscious of each other, and incapable of deciding on each other's powers and efforts by any reflex act." [69] But in 1815 confusion of the two reflected itself in *Alastor.* The poet's search for ideal beauty is one thing, and an exalted theme for poetry. It makes for the loveliness of the *Divina Commedia* because there it is utterly refined from any taint of an earthly or sensual passion. Six years later (1821) Shelley was himself to chronicle such an apotheosis of the spirit in *Epipsychidion.* But the failure to distinguish between physical lure and spiritualized passion gives us the passage in *Alastor* (ll. 174–191) which reports the poet's physical collapse following a dream in which he imagined the veiled maid had yielded to his embraces.[70]

It is scarcely necessary to repeat those parallels, pointed out by Ackermann and others, between Shelley's poem and Wordsworth's and Southey's earlier efforts. They are all in-

[68] *Alastor,* 209–11.

[69] Letter to J. and M. Gisborne, July 19, 1821. *Letters,* ii. 883.

[70] "The confusion of ideals with appetites is a phase of growth in all men who are both passionate and imaginative; and those who continue to grow outgrow it, and understand themselves better for the experience."—Clutton-Brock, *Shelley the Man and the Poet,* p. 108.

cluded in Mr. Locock's excellent edition of Shelley's poems.[71] But this in general must be noted: that though not only much of the wording, but also the movement of the verse echoes Wordsworth and Southey to a very considerable extent; though a certain weakness may be traced to "the intermittance of the allegory,[72] and though some may object to what is characteristically his method, the very obvious preoccupation of Shelley with his own personality in drawing the leading character of this poem, there is in it a melody, distinct and moving, which is Shelley's own creation out of many elements—Miltonic, Shakespearean, Wordsworthian, Landorian. Professor Saintsbury remarks also "a certain breathlessness—; plenty of trisyllabic feet; very few though some, redundant syllables; a love for brilliant, opal-like spots of color; and a predilection for very strong, full-stop pauses at or near the middle.[73]

It may surprise some students of his poetry to learn that the theme implied in the title of Alastor was in Shelley's mind as early as 1811. Writing to Hogg, on May 8th, that year, he said:

Solitude is most horrible, in spite of the αφιλαμτία which, perhaps, vanity has a share in; but certainly not with my own good will I cannot [*sic*] endure the horror, the evil, which comes to *self* in solitude. . . . What a strange being I am; how inconsistent, in spite of all

[71] But apparently no note has been taken of the close resemblance between Peacock's *Inscription for a Mountain Dell* (1812) and *Alastor*, 50–66. The account between the two poets is, however, more than balanced by Peacock's borrowing in *Rhododaphne*, from *Alastor*. Cf. *Alastor*, 129 ff, with *Rhododaphne*, ii. 201–2; *Alastor*, 151 ff. with *Rhododaphne*, iii. 106 ff. and iv. 116 ff.; *Alas.* 188–9 with Rhod. vi. 375–376; *Alas.* 172–89 with *Rhod.* vi. 357–80; *Alas.* 455–6 with *Rhod.* vi. 271–3.

[72] Elton, *Survey of English Literature*. 1780–1830, ii. 189.

[73] Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, iii. 105.

my boasted hatred of self: this moment thinking I could so far overcome Nature's law, as to exist in complete seclusion, the next starting from a moment of solitude—starting from my own company, as if it were that of a fiend—seeking anything rather than a continued communion with *self*. Unravel this mystery, but—no, I tell you to find the clue which even the bewildered explorer of the cavern cannot reach.[74]

Thus the significance of the "cavern," introduced into *Alastor*,[75] through which the boat of the poet speeds swiftly and silently, is easily understood[76] and Shelley has himself clarified his intent in describing the poet's journey along a river in the lines:

> . . . O stream!
> Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
> Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
> Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
> Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,
> Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course
> Have each their type in me.[77]

If we turn to the prose fragment, *Speculations on Metaphysics*, written in the same year (1815) we shall get further light on Shelley's river and cave symbols. In this fragment we are told that

thought can with difficulty visit the intricate and winding chambers which it inhabits. It is like a river whose rapid and perpetual stream flows outwards;—The caverns of the mind are obscure, and

[74] Letters, i. 70–1.
[75] II, 363 ff.
[76] Cf. Mary Shelley's extended explanation of the cave symbol. *Valperga*, i. 99–102.
[77] *Alastor*, 502–8.

shadowy; or pervaded with a lustre, beautifully bright indeed, but shining not beyond their portals.[78]

And in the *Essay on Christianity* (1815) Shelley affirms the possession by "every human mind" of "what Bacon calls its 'idola specûs'—peculiar images which reside in the inner cave of thought."[79] Thus the river is a symbol of thought. Things reflected in the stream exist; unless they are so reflected they do not exist. The philosophy in Berkeleian, but the cave image was Plato's and that of Porphyry (*De Antro Nympharum*). The poet is roused from sleep and afterwards driven along in his boat by a Power—the Benignant Principle of the *Essay on Christianity*—over which he has no control but of which he is the passive slave.

> . . . serenely now
> And moveless as a long-forgotten lyre
> Suspended in the solitary dome
> Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
> I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
> May modulate with murmurs of the air,
> And motions of the forest and the sea,
> And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
> Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.[80]

From the windings of the cavern the boat emerges into a whirlpool which, being drawn up to higher levels by the force that has impelled the little shallop to this point, raises it to the plane of

[78] *Prose Works* ii. 291. The illumination of the cave is fully explained by Mary Shelley in the passage in *Valperga* before referred to.
[79] *Prose Works*, ii. 357.
[80] *Alastor*, 41–9.

. . . a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides [81]

and urged on by a "wandering stream of wind" [82] the boat enters quiet waters. From this point the poet passes through scenes unmistakably drawn from Shelley's journey in August up the Thames, or from his observation of the scenery of that river, and of the great forest, at Windsor. Repeated references [83] to the premature aging of the poet prepare us for the catastrophe which concludes the poem, when on the threshold of a green recess Death claims him for his own.

The poem is full of imagery and suggestion later repeated in other poems from the same pen, even as it is to some extent bound up with a poem which preceded it. To speak of the latter first, we may discover a very obvious relationship between the following:

Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day.
—*Alastor*, 337–9.

Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half seen.
—*Alastor*, 454–7.

. . . pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day.
—*Summer Evening Churchyard*, 3–4.

Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.
—*Summer Evening Churchyard*, 5–6.

[81] *Ibid.* 392–3.
[82] *Ibid.* 397.
[83] *E. g.*, ll. 249, 413, 471, 534–5.

The Manichæan allegory of the eagle and the serpent in struggle, earlier described by Ovid (*Metamorphoses,* iv. 449–52) is here first presented, and reappears expanded in Shelley's next great poem, *Laon and Cythna.*

As an eagle grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
O'er the wide aery wilderness
—*Alastor,* 227–232.

An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—
. . . .
The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.
. . . the vast bird would shake
The strength of his unconquerable wings
As in despair . . .
—*Laon and Cythna,* i. 193, 196–8, 239–41.

To this conception of our life Shelley clung for a considerable time. In the *Essay on Christianity* he states his position clearly in prose; [84] and it is just possible that it was the influence of Shelley's thought upon Byron which injected this philosophy into *Cain,* a half-dozen years later, when Byron and Shelley were together in Italy.

The ending of *Alastor,* with its anticipations of elegiac lines in *Laon and Cythna* [85] and *Hellas* [86] and of the mood of *Adonais,* indicates a new watermark in Shelley's achievement

[84] And see his essay, *On the Devil and Devils* in *Prose Works* ii. 383–4.
[85] ll. 4697 ff.
[86] ll. 201–6.

as an artist, and in it we can hear, above the echoes of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, a new voice in the fields of English poetry, carrying the burden of harmonies yet undreamed-of, songs strangely beautiful:

> . . . Art and eloquence,
> And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
> To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
> It is a woe too "deep for tears," when all
> Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
> Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
> Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
> The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
> But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
> Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
> Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.[87]

[87] *Alastor*, 710–20; and cf. *Laon and Cythna*, ii. st. xx.; *Hellas*, 197–208.

CHAPTER X

(CONCLUDED)

IN the meantime, while such a poem as this was in the making, Shelley was not free from harassing demands upon his bounty. Claire Clairmont might be sent away, but she had to be maintained by the generous Shelley; and so in October we beheld him writing on Claire's behalf the following hitherto unpublished letter [88] to his bankers:

Bishopgate Heath
Oct. 9, 1815.

Gentlemen

I have to request that you would be so obliging as to remit & place to my account *ten pounds:* directed to "Miss Clairmont, Post Office, Enniscorthy, Wexford, Ireland"—

Your obliged Sert.,
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

[addressed outside]:
Messrs. Brookes & Co.
Bankers
Chancery Lane
London

Godwin, too, was troubling Shelley with a suit now threatening against him from a Mr. Hogan, for a debt of £200 or £250.[89] Shelley first investigated the matter, warning the lawyer to whom he wrote not to inform Godwin of his in-

[88] From the original holograph letter in the possession of W. T. Spencer, Esq., London.

[89] Shelley speaks with uncertainty as to which was the correct figure, in his letter to Hayward, Oct. 19, 1815. *Letters*, i. 447.

terest in the case. In December, as the following hitherto-unpublished letter proves, Shelley came forward to meet a debt of Godwin's in the amount of £200, owing to Joseph Hume, Esq., of Somerset House.[90]

Bishopgate Heath
Dec. 24. 1815.

Gentlemen

In the course of this week Mr. Joseph Hume of Somerset House. will present a check of £200, which I would be obliged to you to pay on receiving a promissory note for the amount payable at a month's date or under. I should also feel obliged if you would trouble yourself to present the note when due & to receive the money.

Your obliged & obedient St.

P. B. Shelley.

[addressed outside]:
Messrs. Brookes & Co.
Bankers
Chancery Lane
London [91]

[letter postmarked]:
STAINES
25 Dec. 25
1815

This communication was succeeded by another of January 7, 1816, in which Shelley, in order to make clear to Godwin his own financial condition, in the face of the latter's demand upon him for £1250, detailed the progress of negotiations pending for the purchase by Sir Timothy of his son's reversion on certain of the Shelley estates. He is willing to help Godwin, but can yet do so only by offering his security to those

[90] Hume is mentioned in a letter from Godwin to his wife, May 18, 1811, as demanding the payment of £40 from him. Kegan Paul, *William Godwin,* ii. 182. Hume is also referred to by Shelley in a letter to Godwin, Nov. 24, 1816. *Letters,* ii. 527.

[91] From the original holograph letter in the possession of W. T. Spencer, Esq., London. The check for £200, dated Dec. 26, 1815, was paid, and is among the Spencer MSS.

who might have the funds to relieve him. He offered, in order to forward such a plan, to "give evidence of the existence of the negotiation" between himself and his father, the negotiation not yet being completed.

The debt to Hogan still remaining unpaid, on January 18th Shelley offered to sell an annuity to meet this obligation of Godwin's. The latter part of the letter voices the earliest of those mild but well-warranted remonstrances against Godwin's coldness and aloofness, which had cut the warm-hearted poet to the quick. "Perhaps," said Shelley, "it is well that you should be informed that I consider your last letter to be written in a certain style of haughtiness and encroachment, which neither awes nor imposes upon me. But I have no desire to transgress the limits which you placed to our intercourse, nor in any future instance will I make any remarks but such as arise from the strict question in discussion. Perhaps you do well to consider every word irrelevant to that question which does not regard your personal advantage." Three days later, while still urging Godwin to find some friend who might advance funds on the security of Shelley *post-obits*, Shelley again found it necessary to defend himself against Godwin's abuse. "If you really think me vicious," wrote the poet-philanthropist, "such haughtiness as I imputed to you is perhaps to be excused. But I, who do not agree with you in that opinion, cannot be expected to endure it without remonstrance. I can easily imagine how difficult it must be, in addressing a person whom we despise or dislike, to abstain from phrases, the turn of which is peculiar to the sentiments with which we can not avoid regarding such a person. Perhaps I did wrong to feel so deeply or notice so readily a spirit of which you seem to have been unconscious." Though he had warned Godwin,

with good reasons, not to appeal to Hayward for funds, by the 23rd of January he went counter to this because it seemed the last desperate resort. He reminded Godwin that the gift of £1000 in the first part of the preceding year had been made with the intent not to increase the obligation by further donations until the second settlement between himself and Sir Timothy should have been consummated in November 1815.

At this stage in these dreary negotiations, an event occurred of great import to Shelley and Mary, for on the 24th of January their first male child was born. Generously enough to the memory of Godwin, they named the little boy William. For three brief years their hopes and affections were to be centered on him. Fear lest he should be taken from them by the rude hand of the Court of Chancery was to motivate their flight to Italy in 1818 and when another Hand at length snatched him away Shelley was to write, in his memory, some of the most impassioned lines that ever proceeded from his pen; [92] while Mary, who could not forget her first son, was to describe the little boy thus:

Sleep and gentle dreams spread an irradiation of beauty over him: his glowing cheek, his eyes hardly closed, the masses of rich auburn hair that clustered on a brow of infantine smoothness and candour, the little hand and arm, which, thrown above his head, gave an air of helplessness to his attitude, combined to form a picture of childish grace and sweetness, which no woman, and that woman a mother, could look on without emotions of tenderness. "What an angelic

[92] Cf. the poems, *To William Shelley, To William Shelley*, I, and *To William Shelley*, II, in Oxford edition of Shelley's *Poetical Works*, pp. 598, 635, and 646.

child," said the fair sister of Warbeck, as she stooped to kiss his rosy cheek; "what a noble looking boy." [93]

But Godwin's need of funds allowed Shelley little surcease then and affords us little now. On the day after William's birth Shelley let Godwin know that "A Mr. Bryant, a Sussex man," [94] had written to him to inquire whether he would sell the reversion of "a small estate" in that county; to whom Shelley had replied that he then hoped to sell the whole estate to his father; but that if that deal failed, he would gladly entertain a proposal from Bryant. "I would not sacrifice anything essential to the raising of this money," wrote Shelley, "to exempt myself from the sensations, however painful, which could not fail to arise on meeting a man, who having been once my friend, would receive me with cold looks and haughty words."

Now impended a momentary crisis. On February 16 Shelley announced to Godwin the heart-breaking intelligence: "In the course of a few weeks I shall certainly leave the neighborhood of London, and possibly even execute my design of settling in Italy. I do not know that it is best for you to see me. On me it would inflict deep dejection. But I would not refuse anything which I can do, so that I may benefit a man whom, in spite of his wrongs to me, I respect and love. Besides, I shall certainly not delay to depart from the haunts of men. Your interests may suffer from your own fastidiousness; they shall not be injured by my wayward hopes and disappointments." The last phrase is probably an echo of one of Godwin's reproaches visited on Shelley for his failure

[93] *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*, i. 91. The context makes it clear beyond doubt that Mary was thinking of William in this description.

[94] William Bryant. This may have been a son of that William Bryant who in 1735 advanced £200 to Shelley's grandfather, then in Newark, N. J.

to redeem the whole of his generous assurance of aid.

However this may be, Godwin's mood at the time may be easily gauged from the following unpublished letter addressed to Shelley in reply to the letter just discussed. The MS. is, unfortunately, incomplete, but even as it stands, valuable for the insight it affords into Godwin's attitude toward Shelley at this time.

Skinner Street,
Feb. 23, 1816.

Sir

Agitated, & almost driven to despair, as I was by your communication of the 16th instant, I wrote to Mr. Turner,[95] requesting him to come to town, & assist me with his counsel & advice. I of course laid before him every information I possessed, & his conclusions were full of encouragement. He has since talked to you on the subject, & the thing I have most earnestly to wish, is that you may listen to & avail yourself of his suggestions.

What has been most wanting hitherto is, that, under the state of estrangement between you & me (which, & the cause of it, no one can more deeply lament than I do) we should have an able & adequate medium of communication. This, if you will admit of it, I think I have met in Turner. I never met with any one that surpassed him in clearness of legal understanding; & any thing that I could suggest (which you refer to in your letter received this morning) you can learn with advantages much beyond any I could give it, for him.

What I spoke of in my last, was built on the idea, that where two parties are disposed to make a certain exchange for their mutual advantage, it cannot be difficult to find out the way. You can certainly join your father in cutting off the entail; no lawyer will dispute that. If he is desirous you should do so, I am persuaded he can contrive a way to grant you a boon to induce you to do so—if not in

[95] Thomas Turner, cf. Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, i. 547.

the very way that was meditated last year, in some other that may perhaps be as good. Good will & good faith alone are necessary. For example, Sir Timothy could join you in raising a sum for your benefit; & you in return could grant a bond for certain sums payable to certain persons on his decease. There are some difficulties in this, but perhaps not invincible.

This was the precise idea in my head in writing the sentence to which I refer. But the ideas of Turner were so much more animating than I had then conceived, that perhaps these hints are not worth pursuing. I should be unwilling to put in my sickle, & [?amass] a harvest, which I hope he has so auspiciously begun.

I write to him by this post, & suggest the benefits that may result from his seeing you before you come [? to London.] *The rest of the letter is wanting.*[96]

On February 17 Shelley had better news for the anxious Godwin.

I hasten to relieve your anxiety. I have seen Hayward and arranged with him to sign the deed at twelve o'clock next Monday week. In what I have said to him, as you will discover, I have taken every imaginable precaution that you should not be disappointed.

This was on a Saturday. The following Monday, Shelley reported that a suit in chancery had been settled upon as the best way of determining to what extent Sir Timothy or himself might use the estate devised by Sir Bysshe, the immediate question involving their right to cut timber on the estates. Godwin received the unwelcome announcement that Shelley would receive no part of the great properties until Sir Timothy's death. "How does this information affect your prospects?" he asked. "Does anything remain to be done by

[96] From the holograph original letter lately in the possession of the writer.

me? You have entire knowledge of my resources, my situation, and my disposition toward you; what do you think I can do, or I ought to do to set you free?"

As to his plan for departure from England, or from London, which should be done, not yet being determined, he assured Godwin on the 21st of February: "I shall certainly not leave this country, or even remove to a greater distance from the neighborhood of London, until the unfavorable aspect assumed by my own affairs shall appear to be unalterable; or until all has been done by me which it is possible for me to do for the relief of yours. This was my intention from the moment that I first received an intimation of the change. I wrote to you for the purpose of giving you an opportunity of making my assistance as available to you as possible before I departed. I shall remain here, or in this neighborhood for the present, and hold myself in readiness to do my utmost towards advancing you the money. You are perhaps aware that one of the chief motives which strongly urges me either to desert my native country, dear to me from many considerations, or resort to its most distant and solitary regions, is the perpetual experience of neglect or enmity from almost every one but those who are supported by my resources." And in a postscript he added: "Hayward wrote today to say that he had everything ready for Monday, twelve o'clock. I shall be punctual."

This conference having taken place as appointed on the 26th, Shelley wrote out a report to Godwin on the evening of that day. Of all Shelley's letters this one, it seems to me, most positively refutes the notion held by some of Shelley's critics that he never had his feet on the earth; that he was merely a "bright being," to borrow one critic's phrase, or a citizen of Mercury, according to another more intimate friend

or interpreter; and that he was therefore incapable of mastering the ordinary details of this world's business. His explanation to Godwin of the involved legal aspects of the Shelley properties is as clear as a simple sum in arithmetic. But the news conveyed that, as things stood, Shelley would not profit by the previously executed deed of disclaimer, could hardly have been welcome to Godwin.

In fact, we know that the letter upset him completely, and that his rejoinder to Shelley must have been hard for the latter, who had done his utmost for Godwin, to read. Shelley replied on March 6th:

I confess that I do not understand how the pecuniary engagements subsisting between us in any degree impose restrictions on your conduct towards me. They did not, at least to your knowledge or with your consent, exist at the period of my return from France, and yet your conduct towards me and your daughter was then precisely such as it is at present. In my judgment neither I, nor your daughter, nor her offspring, ought to receive the treatment which we encounter on every side. I lamented also over my ruined hopes, hopes of all that your genius once taught me to expect from your virtue, when I found that for yourself, your family, and your creditors, you would submit to that communication with me which you once rejected and abhorred, and which no pity for my poverty or sufferings, assured willingly for you, could avail to extort. Do not talk of forgiveness again to me, for my blood boils in my veins, and my gall rises against all that bears the human form, when I think of what I, their benefactor and ardent lover, have endured of enmity and contempt from you and all mankind.

I cannot mix the feelings to which you have given birth with details in answer to your views of my affairs. I can only say that I think you are too sanguine, but that I will do all that I can, not to disappoint you. I see much difficulty and some danger, but I am in no

temper to overrate my own inconveniences. I shall certainly remain in London some days. Meanwhile, oblige me by referring to the letter in which I mentioned Bryant, and enclose me his direction as soon as possible. I have left his letter at Bishopgate.

In a reply to another letter from Godwin, Shelley writes on the 7th:

The hopes which I had conceived of receiving from you the treatment and consideration which I esteem to be justly due to me were destroyed by your letter dated the 5th. The feelings occasioned by this discovery were so bitter and so excruciating that I am resolved for the future to stifle all those expectations which my sanguine temper too readily erects on the slightest relaxation of the contempt and the neglect in the midst of which I live. I must appear the reverse of what I really am, haughty and hard, if I am not to see myself and all that I love trampled upon and outraged. Pardon me, I do entreat you, if, pursued by the conviction that where my true character is most entirely known, I have met with the most systematic injustice, I have expressed myself with violence, overlook a fault caused by your own equivocal politeness, and I will offend no more. I have left a note at Anderton's Coffee House appointing an interview with Bryant. If I have a fair offer on the subject of reversion, there is at once an end to the objections which I should be inclined to make to any other arrangement from the supposition of my father's settling in some manner as the basis of the original proposal. If Bryant is in earnest I will make Longdill treat with him.

Two days after, Shelley complained that he had "made an appointment with Bryant which he has not kept, probably because he has not called at the coffee house yet. I do not regret this neglect as I think that a negotiation with him would be safest postponed." Another week passed, and Shelley reported progress: "I have been active in the endeavor to raise money. I have seen Dawe, and attempt by every possible in-

ducement to urge him to make the advance. He has not refused, and even has promised that if he can procure any money he would willingly lend it. I have seen Bryant also, but nothing can be done with him until the question between my father and myself is disposed of. This cause is to come on and to receive judgment next Tuesday."

Nevertheless, although he said nothing could be done with Bryant, he did not cease negotiations with him. This we know from two letters. The first letter [97] is now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and is reproduced by the kind permission of Dr. Craster, Acting Librarian.

Mr. Shelley presents his complts to Mr. Bryant, & is exceedingly obliged to him for the loan of the MSS. which shall be taken care of & returned at an early opportunity.

Mr. S. would, if possible, be at Mr. Bryant's at 12 o'clock. He hopes that it would equally suit D. Bethune to change the appointment to 2 o'clock, when Mr. S. will not fail.

32, Howard Street, Strand

Monday, Ma. 18, 1816.

The appointment was probably kept at the changed hour; and another meeting on the 19th or 20th must have followed, for on the 21st Shelley informed Godwin: "I have not been unemployed in attempting to raise money, though I fear ineffectually. I have seen Bryant twice, and I fear that nothing favourable will result from my negotiation with him; he has promised, however, to write if he should be able to do anything. My principal hope is Dawe." A week later the

[97] It appears at fol. 114b in a volume (MS Autogr. b. 4, s. c. 35574) of autographs and autograph letters first loaned to the Bodleian in 1885, and then presented to the library in 1912 by H. R. H. the Duchess of Albany. It was first published by the present writer in *The Athenæum*. London. July 30, 1920.

hitherto tireless son-in-law cried out in weariness: "Can you not yourself see these money-lenders?" At the same time he reported: "I had a long and most painful conversation with Turner last night on the subject of your pecuniary distress. I am not unwilling to do my utmost, nor does my disposition in the least depend on the question of your demonstrating kindness to myself or Mary. I see that, if anything is to be done, it must be done instantly." But in the next breath he confessed: "You know my habitual, my constitutional inability to deal with monied men. I have no friend who will supply my deficiencies, none who interest themselves in my own, much less in your concerns, which I have, as much as one man can make those of another, made my own."

On the 8th, 14th, and 24th of April, Shelley wrote to Bryant on the subject of the loan; but at Shelley's departure for the Continent on May 3rd nothing tangible was forth-coming from that source and it is small wonder that at length, weary of a half-year of constant haggling, he fled with Mary to a spot somewhat removed from Skinner Street. Yet in his last letter, written from Dover, Shelley conveyed a crumb of comfort to Godwin. "My father is to advance me a sum to meet, as I have alleged, engagements contracted during the dependence of the late negotiation. This sum is extremely small, and is swallowed up almost in such of my debts and the liquidation of such securities as I have been compelled to state in order to obtain the money at all. A few hundred pounds will remain; you shall have 300 pounds from this source in the course of the summer. I am afraid nothing can be done with Bryant. He promised to lend me 500 pounds on my mere bond; of course he failed."

As for a conclusion to this study of Shelley's large-heartedness toward Godwin, he has himself, in this same let-

ter from Dover, given us the best record of his state of mind as he left England "perhaps forever." This is his "Ave et Vale":

The motives which determined me to leave England, and which I stated to you in a former letter, have continued since that period to press on me with accumulated force. Continually detained in a situation where what I esteem a prejudice does not permit me to live on equal terms with my fellow beings, I resolved to commit myself to a decided step. Therefore I take Mary to Geneva, where I shall devise some plan of settlement, and only leave her to return to London, and exclusively devote myself to business.

I leave England, I know not, perhaps for ever. I return alone, to see no friend, to do no office of friendship, to engage in nothing that can soothe the sentiments of regret almost like remorse, which, under such circumstances, every one feels who quits his native land.

I respect you, I think well of you, better perhaps than of any other . . . whom England contains; you were the philosopher who first awakened, and who still as a philosopher to a very great degree regulates my understanding. It is unfortunate for me that the part of your character which is least excellent should have been met by my convictions of what was right to do. But I have been too indignant, I have been unjust to you—forgive me; burn those letters which contain the records of my violence, and believe that, however what you erroneously call fame and honour separate us, I shall always feel towards you as the most affectionate of friends.

Shelley was always "writing himself down," in his poems, and essays, and letters. This fragment of autobiography, just quoted, is one of his best. It needs no commentary.

CHAPTER XI

FRANCE: SWITZERLAND: AND SAVOY

Meeting with Byron—Trip Round Lake Geneva—Vale of Chamouni—Hymn to Intellectual Beauty—Mont Blanc.

WHEN Mary and Shelley and "Willmouse" took ship at Dover for Calais, they were accompanied by Claire, who for a blessed year had allowed Shelley and Mary to enjoy without her the delight of each other's society under their own roof-tree. The date of her return to their companionship is uncertain. On March 12th Shelley had made out to her a draft on his bankers for the sum of £20. The check [1] is dated at London, and it is probable from other evidence [2] that she was in London at the time. The story of how Claire, "as easily managed by the person [she] loved as the reed is by the wind," [3] had succeeded in "unphilosophising" a noble lord who about this time was separating from his wife, is a part of the story of the life of Lord Byron, but need not long delay us here. The curious will find the letters which the mad girl sent to Byron in Appendix vii of the third volume of Byron's *Letters and Journals*. Byron was at the time on the Sub-Committee of Management at Drury Lane Theatre; and Claire, who at first employed an *alias*, proposed to him her desire for a theatrical career, but on Byron's opening the way for her to secure an oppor-

[1] *Brookes—Shelley Correspondence.*

[2] Lord Byron's verses to Claire, dated Mar. 28, 1816. Cf. Mayne, *Byron*, ii. 67.

[3] *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Prothero, iii. 437. The phrase is quoted by Claire as Shelley's analysis of her outstanding weakness.

tunity for such a life, her interest in the subject waned, and she openly proposed a union out of wedlock to him. He yielded at last to her importunings, albeit, his biographers would have us believe, half-unwillingly. When, therefore, Claire started with Shelley and Mary for the Continent, she was already the prospective mother of a child by Lord Byron.

It seems that her companions on the voyage were unaware in May of her *liaison,* or at any rate of its consequences; and Claire was able to turn them in the direction of Switzerland where she hoped to meet Lord Byron. The departure from Dover has been described by Mary:

> It was a serene starlight night, and the dark line of the English coast continued for some time visible at intervals, as we rose on the broad back of the waves. . . . I looked with sad affection on this last glimpse of sea-girt England, and strained my eyes not too soon to lose sight of the castellated cliff, which rose to protect the land of heroism and beauty from the inroads of ocean.[4]

Paris received the wanderers on the 8th of May, and from the capital they proceeded by the route covered two years previously, to Troyes; thence by "the road of the Côte d'Or, through Auxerre, Dijon, and Dôle, over the Jura to Geneva." [5]

Shelley eagerly described the range to Peacock:

> The mountains of Jura exhibit scenery of wonderful sublimity. Pine forests of impenetrable thickness, and untrodden, nay, inaccessible expanse, spreading on every side. Sometimes descending, they follow the route into the valleys, clothing the precipitous rocks, and struggling with knotted roots between the most barren clefts. Some-

[4] *The Last Man,* iii. 145.
[5] *Ibid.* iii. 184.

From an early woodcut (? xviii saec.)

GENEVA

Visited by Shelley and Byron in 1816.

times the road winds high into the region of frost, and there these forests become scattered, and loaded with snow.[6]

In *The Last Man* a view[7] of the lake of Geneva which Shelley had from the summit of the Jura, is described as follows:

Adrian had gone first. I saw him, while I was detained by the loosening of a girth, struggling with the upward path, seemingly more difficult than any we had yet passed. He reached the top, and the dark outline of his figure stood in relief against the sky. He seemed to behold something unexpected and wonderful; for, pausing, his head stretched out, his arms for a moment extended, he seemed to give an All Hail! to some new vision. Urged by curiosity, I hurried to join him. After battling for many tedious minutes with the precipice, the same scene presented itself to me, which had wrapped him in extatic wonder . . .

Nature, or nature's favourite, this lovely earth, presented her most unrivalled beauties in resplendent and sudden exhibition. Below, far, far below, even as it were in the yawning abyss of the ponderous globe, lay the placid and azure expanse of Lake Leman; vine-covered hills hedged it in, and behind dark mountains in cone-like shape, or irregular cyclopean wall, served for further defence. But beyond, and high above all, as if the spirits of the air had suddenly unveiled their bright abodes, placed in scaleless altitude in the stainless sky, heaven-kissing, companions of the unattainable ether, were the glorious

[6] Shelley, Letter to Peacock, from Hotel de Secheron, Geneva, May 15, 1816. *Letters,* ii. 485–6. Mary included several sentences (a few very slightly altered) from this letter in her letter of May 17th from the same address, which was published in the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour,* 1817. pp. 85–97.

[7] Which they had not had on their entry into Geneva; for Mary writes: "the snow falling against the windows of our carriage assisted the coming darkness to deprive us of the view of the lake of Geneva and the far-distant Alps." Letter, 17 May 1816. *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 132. There is a passage in Claire's revised Diary of 1814 (Pforzheimer Collection) somewhat similar to this description in Mary's novel.

Alps, clothed in dazzling robes of light by the setting sun. And, as if the world's wonders were never to be exhausted, their vast immensities, their jagged crags, and roseate painting, appeared again in the lake below, dipping their proud heights beneath the unruffled waves,—palaces for the naiads of the placid waters. Towns and villages lay scattered at the foot of Jura, which, with dark ravine, and black promontories, stretched its roots into the watery expanse beneath.[8]

The lake and its environs presented, Mary remarked in a letter of May 17, "a bright summer scene without any of that sacred solitude and deep seclusion" [9] that had delighted them at Lucerne. On Saturday, May 25, Lord Byron and his physician, Dr. John William Polidori, arrived at the Hotel de Londres at Secheron, where the Shelleys were staying, and Byron set down his age on the hotel register as 100. Not later than the 27th the two parties came together; and Dr. Polidori's memorandum of Shelley's attendance at dinner with Byron on that date describes the author of *Queen Mab* and *Alastor* as "bashful, shy, consumptive; twenty-six; separated from his wife; keeps the two daughters of Godwin, who practice his [Godwin's?] theories; one L[ord] B[yron]'s." [10] Polidori, then, was early in the secret of Byron's relations with Claire. The next day, an invitation from Shelley to take dinner with him was declined by Byron,[11] but he and Polidori walked out with Bysshe and, says the doctor, "got into his boat, though the wind raised a little sea upon the lake." [12] This bit of information is of considerable interest as from it we learn that Shelley was again indulging his fascinating but perilous pastime of boating; and that he was before Byron's ar-

[8] *The Last Man.* iii. 236–8.
[9] *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* i. 133.
[10] *Diary of Dr. John William Polidori,* ed. Rossetti, 1911. p. 97.
[11] *Ibid.* p. 99.
[12] *Ibid.* p. 101.

rival the owner [13] of this boat and not, as has been maintained,[14] its joint owner with Byron.

Moore is authority for the statement that Shelley had "long before" sent a copy of *Queen Mab* to Lord Byron, "accompanied by a letter, in which, after detailing at full length all the accusations he had heard brought against his [15] character, he added, that, should these charges not have been true, it would make him happy to be honoured with his acquaintance." The letter miscarried, but the book did not, and, says Moore, "Lord Byron was known to have expressed warm admiration of the opening lines of the poem." [16] Those who have read the lines in *Cain:*

> Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
> His lips too, are apart; why then he breathes;

will as I have elsewhere suggested, perhaps trace in them a late echo of this passage in *Mab*, said by Moore to have been admired by Byron.

Thus an acquaintanceship, born in the first instance of admiration for each other's literary achievements, sprang up between the two poets. They were both fond of boating; and Mary Shelley gave Moore an account of how on one occasion they had been out on the lake, and had been caught in a rapid current which nearly drove them on the piles at the harbor entrance. "The waves," she said, "were high and

[13] *Ibid.* pp. 104–5.

[14] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ii. 13. Both Polidori's statement and Mary's reference: "a little harbour contains our boat, in which we *still enjoy* our evening excursions on the water" (letter, 1 June 1816. pub. *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 135) oppose the notion that the boat was owned jointly or purchased, as Dowden hints, after the two poets met.

[15] Moore must have intended "his" to refer to Shelley.

[16] Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, 1830. ii. 22–3.

inspiriting,—we were all animated by our contest with the elements. 'I will sing you an Albanian song,' cried Lord Byron; 'now, be sentimental and give me all your attention.' It was a strange wild howl that he gave forth; but such as, he declared, was an exact imitation of the savage Albanian mode, —laughing, the while, at our disappointment, who had expected a wild Eastern melody." [17]

If, as sometimes happened, "the party landed, for a walk upon the shore . . . Lord Byron would loiter behind . . . lazily trailing his sword stick along, . . . moulding, as he went, his thronging thoughts into shape." At other times when in the boat, he would "lean abstractedly over the side, and surrender himself up, in silence, to the same absorbing task." [18] Again Mary says that to their new quarters at the Campagne Chapuis or Campagne Mont Alégre [19]—to which they moved "by the end of May"—"over the darkened waters, the wind, from far across, bore . . . his voice singing [Moore's] Tyrolese Song of Liberty," which "she then first heard," and which was to her "inextricably linked with his remembrance." [20]

For a time the Shelley party was rather closely confined to the house, for the district was visited by "almost perpetual rain." But the splendor and heat of the sun after, and the play of the lightning during, these storms were a constant cause of wonder on the part of the English travellers not used to such a conflict of the elements in their own land. "One night," writes Mary, "we *enjoyed* a finer storm than I had ever beheld. The lake was lit up, the pines on Jura made visible,

[17] *Ibid.* ii., 23–4.
[18] Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron,* ii. 24.
[19] On the south shore of the lake.
[20] *Ibid.* ii. 27.

and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful bursts over our heads amid the darkness." [21]

Meanwhile Byron, grown weary of too much publicity and the presence of curiosity-seekers at the hotel on the north shore, followed the Shelleys across the lake on June 10, and established himself at the Villa Diodati, where on the same date in 1639 Milton had visited his friend, the learned Genevese theologian, Giovanni, or Dr. John Diodati (1576–1649).[22] "I have taken a very pretty little villa in a vineyard," wrote Byron to Hobhouse, " . . . the Alps behind, and Mount Jura and the lake before." [23] Byron's new residence was but a short distance from Shelley's—a vineyard only intervened—and visits which by this time occurred daily or oftener, were exchanged between the two poets.

Byron's interest in Claire is difficult to gauge for the reason, well-stated by Lady Blessington, that he talked, as he wrote, "for effect," liked "to excite astonishment," and succeeded in destroying "in the minds of his auditors all confidence in the stability of his character." [24] In his letter to the Honorable Augusta Leigh, from Diodati, Geneva, September 8, 1816, he makes the most of the siege which Claire laid to his affections, thus:

. . . as to all these "mistresses"—Lord help me—I have had but one. Now don't scold—but what could I do? A foolish girl, in spite of all I could say or do, would come after me, or rather went before, for I found her here, and I have had all the plague possible to

[21] Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 135.

[22] June 10, 1639 (*O. S.*) Masson, *Life of John Milton*, i. 778.

[23] *Lord Byron's Correspondence, Chiefly with Lady Melbourne, Mr. Hobhouse, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, and P. B. Shelley.* 2 vols. ed. by John Murray. 1922. ii. 11.

[24] *Conversations with Lord Byron.* 1834. p. 45.

persuade her to go back again, but at last she went. Now, dearest, I do most truly tell thee that I could not help this, that I did all I could to prevent it, and have at last put an end to it. I was not in love nor have any love left for any, but I could not exactly play the Stoic with a woman who had scrambled eight hundred miles to unphilosophize me, besides I had been regaled of late with so many "two courses and a dessert" (Alas!) of aversion, that I was fain to take a little love (if pressed particularly) by way of novelty. And now you know all that I know of the matter, & it's over.[25]

Byron's dishonesty in this letter is apparent in several points. In the first place his intimate relations with Claire were an event of their earlier meetings in London; he had yielded to her charms before he or she set foot in Switzerland. Secondly, it is unlikely that this was "all he knew" of the matter. Nor, what might have justified him, was modesty his cause for not revealing Claire's secret to Mrs. Leigh; for in December in a letter to her he breaks out crudely in a postscript:

I forgot to tell you—that the *Demoiselle*—who returned to England from Geneva—went there to produce a new baby B. who is now about to make his appearance.[26]

As often occurs when two friends of a common friend come together with that friend, jealousies will arise, and dissensions, where formerly all was cordiality and good feeling; so now as Byron and Shelley grew more intimate Polidori probably felt himself being "squeezed out" of that intimacy with the noble lord which had been his greatest joy. Byron badgered him, making matters worse. Some disputes arose over the care of Byron's horses. Angered for some unknown reason at

[25] *Astarte*, 1921. p. 267.
[26] *Ibid.* p. 280.

Shelley, Polidori impetuously challenged him to a duel, which was declined; but here Byron intervened to warn his physician: "Recollect, that though Shelley has some scruples about duelling, *I* have none; and shall be, at all times, ready to take his place." [27]

Yet Polidori continued for a time in the company of Lord Byron, and was one of the circle [28] when on a rainy night (June 16) of a rainy week, the conversation turning to ghost stories, the proposal that each should attempt a work of fiction of this order was made and eagerly taken up. Byron on the day following began the narrative, never completed, of *The Vampyre*, later (1819) published with *Mazeppa*. Polidori likewise chose to write of a vampyre, and his completed story, published as the work of Lord Byron in 1819, had a great vogue in England and on the Continent in spite of Murray's and Byron's vigorous denials of its authenticity. Mary Godwin began the composition of her best-known tale of *Frankenstein*, published [29] two years later in London. Shelley, although he "had an implicit belief in ghosts" [30] and might have been expected to surpass all the others in this field, defaulted, but gave Mary no little assistance in the preparation of her romance. "I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband," Mary insisted, "and yet but for his incitement it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world. From this declaration I must except the preface. As far as I can recollect, it was entirely written by him." [31] The late

[27] Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ii. 30.
[28] *Diary of Dr. John William Polidori*, p. 125.
[29] In three volumes by Lackington, Allen & Co.
[30] *Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington*. 1834. p. 42.
[31] Preface to revised edition (1831) of *Frankenstein*.

Dr. Richard Garnett believed that it was because her brain in creation had been "magnetized by his companionship"[32] that in *Frankenstein* Mary produced a work never equalled in her later novels, which were laboriously constructed in the solitude of widowhood.[33]

Two days after the proposal to write these tales of the supernatural, and while the minds of the competing authors were preoccupied with such themes, they began, Polidori says, at midnight "to talk ghostly."[34] Byron recited the lines from *Christabel:*

> Then drawing in her breath aloud,
> Like one that shuddered, she unbound
> The cincture from beneath her breast;
> Her silken robe, and inner vest,
> Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
> Behold! her bosom and half her side
> Are lean and old and foul of hue!
> A sight to dream of, not to tell!
> O shield her! shield sweet Christabel.[35]

At the close of the recital, "Silence ensued, and Shelley, suddenly shrieking and putting his hands to his head, ran out of the room with a candle." Efforts were now diligently made to bring him back to a normal state of mind. To do this Polidori says they "threw water in his face, and after gave him

[32] Introduction to *Tales and Stories by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, 1891. pg. v.

[33] *Valperga* was, indeed, begun before Shelley's death, but was not completed and published until 1823.

[34] *Diary of Dr. John William Polidori.* 1911, p. 128.

[35] *Christabel*, II. 247–55. Line 253 was in the MS. which Scott had read to Byron, but was not published in the first edition of the poem. Against its omission Leigh Hunt protested in the *Examiner's* review of the poem. *Examiner* No. 440, Sun., June 2, 1816. p. 348, col. 1.

ether." Then the diarist explains what had thus upset Shelley. "He was looking at Mrs. Shelley, and suddenly thought of a woman he had heard of who had eyes instead of nipples,[36] which, taking hold of his mind, horrified him." [37]

Three days after these amazing occurrences, Shelley sat down to write the following hitherto unpublished letter [38] to his bankers.

Gentlemen

You would oblige me by sending on my account five pounds to T. Peacock Esq. Great Marlow Bucks.—I should be glad also to recieve [*sic*] a statement of the present situation of my accounts with you, addressed "Poste Restante, Geneve" & have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obliged humble Servant.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Geneva, June 21, 1816.

addressed outside:

Messrs. Brookes Dixon & Son
25, Chancery Lane
London
Angleterre

The evidence of Dr. Polidori's Diary that the now famous journey which Byron and Shelley took about the Lake of Geneva began on June 22, is contradicted by the date of the following unpublished letter; but it seems more likely to have been Shelley's error than Polidori's, whose care would probably have been greater in keeping a day-to-day diary than Shelley's would have been in dating a letter.

[36] Cf. *Witch of Atlas*, xi. 8.
[37] *Diary of Dr. John William Polidori*, p. 128.
[38] *Brookes-Shelley Correspondence.*

Geneva, June 23, 1816.

Gentlemen.

Oblige me by paying Mr. Martin the bearer of this note, ten pounds, & by placing it to my account.

I have the honour to be

Gentlemen, Your obed[ient]S[er]v[an]t

Percy Bysshe Shelley

addressed outside:

Messrs. Brookes & Co.

25, Chancery Lane

by favour of Mr. Martin.[39]

Shelley's record of the journey is contained in a letter to Peacock, July 12, from Montalegre and written when the trip was a matter of history, Shelley and Byron having arrived home on July 1. The chronology and details of events are however kept so carefully that Shelley must have made memoranda from day to day upon which the latter was founded. Perhaps it is an expanded form of his journal entries on the voyage.

The two friends embarked from Montalegre on June 22nd, at 2.30 P. M. Over calm waters they came after three hours' rowing, to a ruined tower near Hernance reputed to have been erected by Cæsar, when that general had confined the Helvetians within his great wall. Arrived that evening at the village of Nernier, the two poets, after securing lodgings, walked down to the shore of the lake, where Shelley remarked the beauty of the "vast expanse of these purple and misty waters broken by the craggy islets near to its slant and 'beached

[39] *Ibid.* The "Mr. Martin" of this check was no other than Godwin, who had some time since requested that Shelley should use *aliases* in making out checks to his order. This is explained in Shelley's letter to Godwin, June 23, 1816, from Evian, Savoie. Says Shelley: "I have put this name, supposing that you would not like your own to be stated."

margin.' " In the village they watched some children playing at Genevan bowls; and Shelley was much struck by the appearance and behavior of one of them, a boy whose gracious manner in receiving a piece of money from Lord Byron set his friend wondering. Says Shelley, in conclusion, after a passage of rapturous admiration of the boy:

> All this might scarcely be; but the imagination surely could not forbear to breathe into the most inanimate forms, some likeness of its own visions, on such a serene and glowing evening, in this remote and romantic village, beside the calm lake that bore us hither.[40]

Next morning they proceeded, past Yvoire and its promontory, to scenes of even "wilder magnificence" than they had before seen on the lake. The mountains of Savoy, their summits "bright with snow, descended in broken slopes to the lake"; above, "the rocks were dark with pine forests," which became "deeper and more immense until the ice and snow mingle[d] with the points of naked rock that pierce[d] the blue air"; while "below, groves of walnut, chestnut, and oak, with openings of lawny fields" betokened another and milder climate. At the mouth of the River Drance, Shelley was impressed by the sight of "thousands of *besolets* or black-hooded terns," beautiful water-birds, "like sea-gulls, but smaller, and with purple on their backs." At Evian-les-Bains where they spent the night of the 23rd, Shelley found the inhabitants "more wretched, diseased, and poor," than he could "ever recollect to have seen." The Hon. Richard Boyle Bernard, passing through the district two years before, had written: "As far as I could judge, the wish of the young men here seems to be, that Savoy should form a canton of Switzerland; but the old men, who formerly lived under the government of the

[40] *Letters*, ii. 490–1.

King of Sardinia, wish for the restoration of the order of things to which they were long accustomed; and it seems most probable that the King of Sardinia will be restored to that part of this ancient patrimony of his family which has not been ceded to France." [41] But Shelley did not apparently agree with him, for he wrote: "The contrast indeed between the subjects of the King of Sardinia, and the citizens of the independent republics of Switzerland, affords a powerful illustration of the blighting mischiefs of despotism, within the space of a few miles." Perhaps Byron's unhappy experience with the Syndic of Evian over a missing passport had something to do with Shelley's low opinion of the people of Savoy.

Leaving Evian on the following morning in a gale, they were driven rapidly down the lake past "mighty forests," "lawns of exquisite verdure, and mountains with bare and icy points, which rose immediately from the summit of the rocks, whose bases were echoing to the waves," to Meillerie. Shortly after quitting this town, they were overtaken by a storm, which, urging forward from the very extremity of the lake, raised "waves of a frightful height and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam." Their danger was increased by the fact that "The hand that managed the sail was an unskilful one"; and that "the lack of concert between him and the man at the rudder" [42] resulted in a broken rudder and the shipping of so much water [43] that Byron and Shelley both expected to be swamped at any moment.

"I felt in this near prospect of death," Shelley confessed to Peacock, "a mixture of sensations, among which terror en-

[41] Bernard, *Tour through Some Parts of France, Switzerland,* etc. 1815. p. 130.

[42] Cf. *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* etc. ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 11.

[43] Bernard has stated that the depth of the lake at Meillerie was 190 fathoms. *Tour,* p. 112.

tered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine." Moore has made Shelley's cool courage stand out even more vividly in his account of this storm.[44] "In the expectation, every moment, of being obliged to swim for his life, Lord Byron had already thrown off his coat, and, as Shelley was no swimmer, insisted upon endeavouring by some means to save him. This offer, however, Shelley positively refused; and seating himself quietly upon a locker, and grasping the rings of each end firmly in his hands, declared his determination to go down in that position, without a struggle." [45] After the final tragedy of July 8, 1822, Trelawny said: "Shelley always declared that in case of wreck he would vanish instantly, and not imperil valuable lives by permitting others to aid in saving his, which he looked upon as valueless." [46]

The magnificence of the scenery about St. Gingoux, where they at length arrived in safety, impressed Shelley so much that he said it would "make a picture in his memory, distinct from all other mountain scenes" he had "ever before visited." Taking a *voiture* at this point they visited the mouth of the Rhone, remarking the rapidity of the stream, and the dark hue of the waters due probably to the quantities of soil and melted snow carried by it into the lake.

At La Tour de Bouverie, "the snowy mountains of La

[44] Godwin, *Cloudesley*. 1830. ii. 261 ff. offers a fictionized version of this storm. For this novel, also, Godwin pillaged other letters of Shelley to Peacock for scenic descriptions, lifting such descriptions bodily from their originals without assigning credit to his source.

[45] Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ii. 31–2.

[46] *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, 1858. p. 121.

Valais, clothed in clouds," "the willowy plane of the Rhone," and "the dark mountains" that overhang Clarens, Vevai, and the lake "formed a striking background for the white spire of a church" on an isolated hill, peeping from among "the tufted chestnut woods." A huge chestnut tree had toppled over before the storm of the preceding day. Says Byron in a note to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:* "On gaining the shore at St. Gingo [*sic*] I found that the wind had been sufficiently strong to blow down some fine old chestnut trees on the lower parts of the mountains.[47] In the meadows near St. Gingoux Shelley said he gathered a nosegay of such flowers as he had never seen in England.

He was now reading Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise,* already known to Byron. On the 25th of June Shelley confessed that he had read *Julie* "all day," and found it "an overflowing of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility." On this day the two poets "sailed for Clarens, determining first to see the three mouths of the Rhone, and then the castle of Chillon." The Castle was their first stop; and there is little need to remind readers of Byron's poetry as to what use "the Pilgrim of Eternity" made of this visit:

> Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
> A thousand feet in depth below
> Its massy waters meet and flow;
> A double dungeon wall and wave
> Have made—and like a living grave.
> Below the sources of the lake
> The vault lies . . .[48]

wherein François de Bonnivard was imprisoned, whose story is that of *The Prisoner of Chillon.* At Clarens they believed

[47] *Poetical Works of Lord Byron.* ed. Coleridge. ii. 305.
[48] *Prisoner of Chillon,* 107–9, 113–16.

they were beholding "le bosquet de Julie" but the next day they found how they had been deceived in this.[49] How Shelley's attitude toward the presence of Love, or the Benignant Principle, in all Nature, infected Byron at this time, may be judged from a reading of Byron's lines written at Clarens.

> Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
> Thine air is the young breath of passionate Thought,
> Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above,
> The very Glaciers have his colours caught
> And Sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
> By rays which sleep here lovingly . . .
> God . . .
> Is a pervading Life and Light,—so shown
> Not on those summits solely, nor alone
> In the still cave and forest . . .
> All things are here of Him . . .
> . . . the gush of springs,
> And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
> Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
> The swiftest thought of Beauty, here extend
> Mingling—and made by Love—unto one mighty end.[50]

The charming simplicity of the town of Vevai, which they next visited, awakened Shelley's admiration, as did also the view there obtainable of "the mountains of Savoy and the Valais, the lake, and the valley of the Rhone."[51] From Vevey they advanced to the thriving village of Ouchy, the port of Lausanne. On their way, the "tranquillity and peculiar beauty" of the Pays de Vaud attracted Shelley's wander-

[49] Elton, *An Account of Shelley's Visits to France, Switzerland, and Savoy, 1814–16.* p. 64.

[50] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* iii. Stanzas xcix, c, ci, cii.

[51] Shelley's letter to Peacock July 12, 1816. *Letters,* ii. 499.

ing eye, and he declared this countryside compensated for the solitude he usually admired. Two days of rain delayed them at Ouchy, where Byron wrote out *The Prisoner of Chillon,* and defying the weather they invaded Lausanne and saw the house of Gibbon. Byron gathered some acacia leaves in remembrance of the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* but Shelley refrained, "fearing," he said, "to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau" in thus paying tribute to that "cold and unimpassioned spirit."

"On Saturday, the 30th of June," wrote Shelley, "we quitted Ouchy, and after two days of pleasant sailing arrived on Sunday evening at Montalegre." This statement of Shelley's has been accepted by all his biographers. But by consulting the calendar for 1816 they might have discovered that the 30th of June fell on a Sunday. A careful study of the chronology of Shelley's letter in connection with Dr. Polidori's *Diary* would seem to indicate that Shelley and Byron left Ouchy on Saturday, the 29th, and arrived at Montalegre on Sunday evening, June 30th, or Monday, July 1.

A little more than a fortnight later he summed up, in a letter to Peacock,[52] the profits he believed there had been for them all in their travel. "This much alone is certain," he said confidently, "that before we return we shall have seen, and felt, and heard, a multiplicity of things which will haunt our talk and make us a little better worth knowing than we were before our departure." He promised Peacock that they would return to "the most excellent of nations" in the spring—"perhaps before, perhaps after" and that he would thenceforth make England his "perpetual resting place."

How completely he had been enchanted by his river travel

[52] July 17, 1816. *Letters,* ii. 503.

CHILLON AND LA DENT DU MIDI

The Castle of Chillon, which Shelley visited with Byron, inspired Byron s poem on *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816).

in 1814 and 1815 is apparent from the plan of their return voyage which he next explained to Peacock.

If possible, we think of descending the Danube in a boat, of visiting Constantinople and Athens, then Rome and the Tuscan cities, and returning by the South of France, always following great rivers, the Danube, the Po, the Rhone, and the Garonne; rivers are not like roads, the work of the hands of man; they imitate mind, which wanders at will over pathless deserts, and flows through nature's loveliest recesses, which are inaccessible to anything besides.

When all these travels were at an end—and even as he described the trip he feared they could not carry it out—he expressed a desire to turn to one spot of earth and call it home. He requested Peacock, "the only man" who had "sufficient regard" for him "to take an interest in the fulfilment of this design, and whose tastes conform[ed] sufficiently" to his own "to engage" him to perform this transaction, to secure an unfurnished house for him, "with as good a garden as may be, near Windsor Forest," and to "take a lease of it for fourteen or twenty-one years." He wished "the situation to resemble as nearly as possible that of Bishopgate," and suggested "that Sunning Hill, or Winkfield Plain, or the neighborhood of Virginia Water should afford some possibilities." As for deities to have an oversight of this new home, he said:

Leave Mammon and Jehovah to those who delight in wickedness and slavery—their altars are stained with blood or polluted with gold, the price of blood. But the shrines of the Penates are good wood fires, or window frames intertwined with creeping plants; their hymns are the purring of kittens, the hissing of kettles, the long talks over the past and dead, the laugh of children, [53] the warm wind of summer

[53] Cf. *Laon and Cythna*, II. i 1.

filling the quiet house, and the pelting storm of winter struggling in vain for entrance. In talking of the Penates, will you not liken me to Julius Cæsar dedicating a temple to Liberty?

In a passage omitted from most published texts of this letter to Peacock, Shelley made this interesting comment on his companion of this voyage:

> Lord Byron is an exceedingly interesting person, and as such is it not to be regretted that he is a slave to the vilest and most vulgar prejudices, and as mad as the winds? [54]

Three days after this letter was written, Shelley, Mary, and Claire set off from Geneva on a trip to the Vale of Chamouni. We do not know by what sort of conveyance they went forward, but it may have been in such a carriage as that which the Hon. Richard Boyle Bernard describes himself as taking for the same trip. He says: "It was something like an English *sociable*, but had a leather cover which could occasionally be drawn over our heads, and of which we more than once experienced the utility, in protecting us from the very sudden and violent showers which we sometimes met with." [55] The journey to Chamouni has been described by Shelley in a journal letter hitherto incompletely and most inaccurately published [56] to Peacock, July 22-August 2. In her *Journal* [57] and in *The Last Man* [58] Mary also has left accounts of the trip.

[54] From the text of the letter as advertised by Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge who conducted the sale of Peacock's library, June 11–12, 1866. The passage is quoted by Miss Mayne in her *Byron*, ii. 67, but she does not mention her source.

[55] *Tour through Some Parts of France, Switzerland,* etc. 1815, p. 119.

[56] In my quotations therefrom I have employed the text of the holograph original in the J. Pierpont Morgan Library.

[57] Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* i. 144–6.

[58] iii. 248–60.

"The plains which surround Geneva and intervene between that city and the Alps," wrote Shelley, "are interesting and pretty." The distance of five leagues to Bonneville was covered in four hours. By a road winding along at the foot of two lofty mountains, the Mole and the Brezon, they pushed on to Cluses where a sudden right turning revealed a narrow outlet through which a carriage could barely pass, and they entered the valley of Maglan. About a league beyond the cascade of Nant d'Arpennas, in this valley, they probably secured a good view of Mont Blanc.[59] Proceeding through scenes reminding Shelley of Matlock in Derbyshire, they slept at St. Martin. If they patronized the same hotel, the Hotel de Mont Blanc, at which Bernard called, two years previously, they would have seen from their window, "a most astonishing extent of mountain scenery diversified by the windings of the Arve through a well cultivated valley." [60]

The next day, they had two guides, and Mary and Claire rode on mules—for the carriage road ended at St. Martin—along the valley of the Arve. But why not let Mary's and Shelley's long-lost accounts tell the story?

We left the fair margin of the beauteous lake of Geneva, and entered the Alpine ravines; tracing to its source the brawling Arve, through the rock-bound valley of Servoz, beside the mighty waterfalls, [61] and under the shadow of the inaccessible mountains— while The Valley of the Arve (strictly speaking it extends to that of Chamouni) gradually increases in magnificence and beauty, until, at a place called Servoz, where Mont Blanc and its connected mountains limit one side of the valley, it exceeds and renders insignificant all that I had before

[59] Bernard, *Tour*. pp. 120–1.
[60] *Ibid.* p. 121.
[61] They visited the beautiful cascade of Chede, near Servoz.

the luxuriant walnut-tree gave place to the dark pine, whose musical branches swung in the wind, and whose upright forms had braved a thousand storms—till the verdant sod, the flowery dell, and shrubbery hill were exchanged for the sky-piercing, untrodden, seedless rock, "the bones of the world, waiting to be clothed with everything necessary to give life and beauty." [62]

seen, or imagined. It is not alone that these mountains are immense in size, that their forests are of so immeasurable extent; there is grandeur in the very shapes and colours which could not fail to impress, even on a smaller scale.—No sooner had we entered this magnificent valley than we decided to remain several days. An avalanche fell as we entered it. We heard the thunder of its fall, and in a few minutes more the smoke of its path was visible, and a torrent which it had forced from its bed overflowed the ravine which enclosed it. I wish the wonders and graces of these "palaces of Nature" would induce you to visit them whilst we, who so much value your society, remain yet near them.[63]

The museum at Servoz brought to Shelley the remembrance of those he had seen at Keswick [64] and Bethgelert.[65] They were now but three leagues from Chamouni. Mont Blanc loomed before them, white, immense; and Shelley at the sight confessed: "I never knew, I never imagined what mountains were before." The chain of "aerial summits" connected with

[62] *The Last Man,* iii. 248.

[63] Letter from Shelley to Byron, from Chamouni, July 22, 1816. *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* etc. ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 14–15.

[64] Conducted, when Shelley was in Keswick, by Peter Crosthwaite.

[65] At the foot of Mt. Snowdon, Caernarvonshire North Wales. I find various spellings of the name in guide-books, etc., of the period : Beddgelert, Bedgelert, Bedkelert, etc. Shelley probably visited this place while residing at Tanyrallt in 1812.

Mont Blanc brought "a sentiment of extatic wonder, not unallied to madness," [66] while

> Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
> Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
> Pile around it, ice and rock; [67]

Chamouni was reached on this second day at six o'clock. A visit to the *Glacier des Bossons,* which was but a little way by a slight detour from the road over which they had come, was delayed until the morrow. Shelley had seen the glacier, however, at a distance, and it presented to him a picture as of "a bright belt flung over the black region of pines." [68]

The source of the Arveiron became their objective, the next morning, as they set out on mules to cover the league lying between Chamouni and this scene. Going forward over the Route des Montées, lately widened and improved, they came at last to the source "which lies (like a stage) surrounded on the three sides by mountains and glaciers." [69] They drank some of the clear water of the river and returned to Chamouni. According to Bernard, Montanvert and the *Mer de Glace* were at this time "two of the most distinguished objects of curiosity which this place boasts of." [70] The trio from England probably so understood the matter; for on the second day of their excursions from Chamouni it was to these sights that they directed their steps. A heavy rain delayed their departure until ten o'clock, and they had not gone far before the rain came down upon them in "torrents," and they were soon drenched to the skin. They turned back, and Shelley who,

[66] *Letter from Percy Bysshe Shelley to T[homas] Peacock,* etc., p. 5.
[67] *Mont Blanc: Lines written in the Vale of Chamouni,* 61–3.
[68] *Letter from Percy B. Shelley to T. Peacock,* p. 7.
[69] Mary's journal entry for July 23. Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* i. 144.
[70] *Tour,* etc. p. 131.

on the ascent, had suffered from a severe blow of some sort, now stumbled and fell and lost consciousness, so that he was for some minutes incapacitated from continuing his route." [71]

The next day they were successful in effecting the climb to Montanvert. Says Mary:

I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. . . . The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand spots the traces of the winter avalanche may be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground; some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain, or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which stones continually roll from above; one of them is particularly dangerous, as the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, produces a concussion of the air sufficient to draw destruction upon the head of the speaker. The pines are not tall or luxuriant, but they are somber, and add an air of severity to the scene. I looked on the valley beneath; vast mists were rising from the rivers which ran through it, and curling in thick wreaths around the opposite mountains, whose summits were hid in the uniform clouds. . . .

It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent. For some time I sat upon the rock that overlooks the sea of ice. A mist covered both that and the surrounding mountains. Presently a breeze dissipated the cloud, and I descended upon the glacier. The surface is very uneven, rising like the waves of a troubled sea, descending low, and interspersed by rifts that sink deep. The field of ice is almost a league in width, but I spent nearly two hours in crossing it. The opposite mountain is a bare perpendicular rock.[72]

The rugged and abrupt ravine, which formed one side of Montanvert, was opposite to us, the glacier at our side; at our feet Arveiron,

[71] Mary's journal entry for July 24. Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 145.

[72] *Frankenstein*, ch. ix.

white and foaming, dashed over the pointed rocks that jutted into it, with whirling spray and ceaseless roar. . . . Yellow lightnings played around the vast dome of Mont Blanc, silent as the snow-clad rock they illuminated; all was bare, wild, and sublime, while the singing of the pines in melodious murmurings added a gentle interest to the rough magnificence. Now the riving and fall of icy rocks clave the air; now the thunder of the avalanche burst on our ears. In countries whose features are of less magnitude, nature betrays her living powers in the foliage of the trees, in the growth of herbage, in the soft purling of meandering streams; here, endowed with giant attributes, the torrent, the thunderstorm, and the flow of massive waters, display her activity.[73]

On the top of Montanvert stood a hut of stone, in which, "in a book kept for that purpose," [74] could be read "the praises of all travellers who had viewed these scenes." [75] Little more than a month later, Byron, visiting the hut with his friend John Cam Hobhouse (Lord Broughton) found Shelley's signature in the travellers' book, with the endorsement, also in Shelley's autograph:

Ειμι Φιλάνθρωπος δεμωκράτικος τ' 'άθεος τε[76]

and a subsequent entry by way of comment on Shelley's impiety, in the handwriting of another traveller:

μωρός[77]

The original provocation for Shelley's revelation of his attitude toward church and state was, so Swinburne tells us, "an entry by some one who saw fit here to give vent to an outbreak

[73] *The Last Man,* iii. 252.

[74] Elton, *Account of Shelley's Visits to France, Switzerland,* etc. p. 94.

[75] Bernard, *Tour,* etc. p. 135.

[76] Swinburne, *Notes on the Text of Shelley,* 1869. repub. in *Essays and Studies.* 5th ed. 1901. p. 192.

[77] Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron,* 2nd ed. 1824. p. 225.

of overflowing foolery, flagrant and fervid with the godly grease and rancid religion of a conventicle; some folly about the Alps, God, glory, beneficence, witness of nature to this or that divine thing or person, and such-like matter." [78]

"Do you not think I shall do Shelley a service by scratching this out?" Byron asked; and Hobhouse not dissenting, "he defaced the words with great care." [79] Records Shelley left, however, of his reaction to the grandeur of Mont Blanc and the splendor of the Lake of Geneva, and which no one would or can deface as Byron defaced Shelley's jest in the Montanvert album, are the two poems: *Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni,*[80] and the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.*[81] The first of these was written "as he lingered on the bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni." [82] From the date given at its end on its first publication, the other may be assigned to the second day's sail on the Lake of Geneva with Byron.

"Even the clouds, the winds, and the streams," wrote Godwin, "present us with the image of life, and talk to us of that venerable power which is operating everywhere, and never sleeps." [83] This Power had been recognized by Shelley [84] in the *Essay on Christianity* (1815) and it was the theme of his song in both of these great poems written while the beauty of Switzerland lay like an enchanter's spell upon him, compelling him to acknowledge

[78] Swinburne, *op. cit.*

[79] Lord Broughton, *Recollections of a Long Life,* ed. 1909. ii. 9.

[80] First published at the end of the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour,* ed. 1817, pp. 175–83. The poem is dated at end "June 23, 1816."

[81] First published in the *Examiner.* No. 473. Sun. Jan. 19, 1817, p. 41.

[82] Mary's note on *Poems of 1816* in *Poetical Works,* 1839, iii. 35.

[83] *Fleetwood, or the New Man of Feeling.* ed. 1832, p. 3.

[84] *Shelley Memorials,* 1859. p. 260.

A presence that disturbs us with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. [85]

"Shelley," said Byron, "when I was in Switzerland, used to dose me with Wordsworth—and I remember then reading some things of his with pleasure." [86] Not only does Shelley's sense of the presence of this Power in all Nature, but other imagery and expression in the poems, remind us of Wordsworth. The two poets, too, could claim a kinship of experience in the manner of their conversion to song. Of this Wordsworth has left the unforgettable record in *The Prelude*, of how, on his return home one morning after a belated party with young friends

. . . Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds

. . . . . .

And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
. . . to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me

[85] Wordsworth, *Lines Written a few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, 94 ff.
[86] Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, 2nd ed. 1824. pp. 293–4.

Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit.[87]

Shelley, addressing the Spirit of Beauty and Power in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, says it was

. . . at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!
I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow? [88]

Both poets are endeavoring to find a key within Nature for unlocking the door that leads to human freedom. Shelley is a complete Wordsworthian in the lines:

Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

But we had seen in *Alastor* to what extent Shelley was already an admirer of Wordsworth. The introduction into these later poems of the philosophy of his predecessor marks no new phenomenon in Shelley's thought; nor, indeed, does any part of the thought in these poems reveal Shelley's reason in a new aspect. There are no new symbols, either; but those already used are here combined in ways yet untried, and the metaphysical intent, because these were the product of a poet who was feeling his way toward the technique not yet attained, is still more obscure, and presents greater difficulties than have

[87] *Prelude.* iv. 323–7, 329–31, 333–7.
[88] *Op. cit.* 56–62.

yet appeared in his work. We hear the wind that bears the "impulse from the vernal wood," [89] and from the

> . . . secret Strength of things
> Which governs thought.[90]

to the spirit which like an æolian lyre shows a

> . . . frame more attuned
> To beauty [91]

than is usual among men; the fickle wind, that comes and goes but never to our bidding, and

> Like moonbeams—behind some piny mountain shower,
> . . . visits with inconstant glance
> Each human heart and countenance;[92]

but which when it does visit this "dim vast vale of tears" [93]

> Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
> All new successions to the form they wear;
> Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
> To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
> And bursting in its beauty and its might
> From trees and beasts and men into Heaven's light.[94]

We see the glaciers in *Mont Blanc*, transformed into a symbol of the incursion into life of the power of evil (Ahrimanes) concerning which Shelley, writing to Peacock on the 24th of July, from Chamouni, had queried:

[89] Wordsworth, *Matthew.*
[90] *Mont Blanc*, 139–40.
[91] *Alastor*, 287–8.
[92] *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, 5–7.
[93] *Ibid.* 17.
[94] *Adonais*, 382–7.

Do you, who assert the supremacy of Ahriman, imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in this terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity, and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, avalanches, torrents, rocks, and thunders, and above all these deadly glaciers, at once the proof and symbols of his reign . . . ? [95]

Before the encroachments of this dark power the "giant brood of pines" [96] which had but lately "discoursed excellent music,"

Branchless and shattered stand.[97]

But towering above, "still, snowy and serene" [98] Mont Blanc, the "Monarch of Mountains" [99] is the seat of the unseen snow-storm and the silent winds. Here is preparing the food of that living stream, the Arve (the river of universal thought), which flowing through the ravine (the minds of all men) he had described as being at once the couch and the creation [100] of that river, is augmented by the water from underground streams and cataracts (the thoughts of individuals) the water-falls being often clothed in rainbows (the dress of poetry). The river moves ceaselessly, the center of a scene of constant change, and though in it as in a mirror we now and then perceive reflections

Of some world far from ours
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.[101]

[95] *Letters*, ii. 513.
[96] *Mont Blanc*, 20.
[97] Ibid. 111.
[98] *Ibid.* 61.
[99] Byron, *Manfred*, i. 60.
[100] The Berkeleyan *"esse est percipi."*
[101] *To Jane.* 22–4.

These never tarry long, but, departing, leave us only the remembrance of their glory and the regret that they do not abide with us continually until the last hour

when the Benignant Principle, untrammeled and uncontrolled, visits in the fulness of its power the universal frame of things,[102]

and we awaken "from the dream of life" [103] to the only real Heaven Shelley knew, in which "pain and evil cease" [104] and Man becomes "a portion of the Eternal." [105]

Amid the beauty of the scenery at Montanvert Shelley had come in contact with some English tourists who pleased him little more than the natives of the district. To Peacock he reported:

We met I lament to say some English people here, I will not detail to you the melancholy exhibitions of tourism, which altho' they emanate from the snobisms and exigencies of these vulgar great corrupt the manners of the people, and make this place another Keswick. But the inhabitants of Cumberland are not for a moment to be compared with these people, on whose stupidity, avarice, and imposture engender a mixture of vices horrible and disgusting.[106]

On their return to Chamouni, which took place the same day, they made ready for the journey back to Geneva, and on the following morning (July 26) set off in the rain for St. Martin, their first day's stage. "The scenery," Shelley now found, "had lost something of its immensity," but "visitings of sunset" between showers, blue sky occasionally showing

[102] *Essay on Christianity* in *Shelley Memorials*, 1859. p. 266.
[103] *Adonais*, 344.
[104] *Essay on Christianity*, in *Shelley Memorials*, 1859. p. 266.
[105] *Adonais*, 340.
[106] *Letter from Percy Bysshe Shelley to T. Peacock*, etc. p. 12. This passage is missing from Mr. Ingpen's text of the letter. Ruskin later voiced his rage at the English tourists who fired off "rusty howitzers" to show their admiration of Mont Blanc. *Sesame and Lilies*.

through clouds, the continuation of pine forests, and a haunted chateau "on the edge of a precipice and shadowed over by the eternal forest" awakened the sensitive strings of his soul to expressions of warm admiration. Ten years later, Mary had not forgotten their journey. In *The Last Man* we may read her reference to a portion of this trip.

> We loitered along the lovely Vale of Servoz; passed long hours on the bridge, which, crossing the ravine of Arve, commands a prospect of its pine-clothed depths, and the snowy mountains that wall it in.[107]

After spending a night at St. Martin they pressed on, through valleys traversed before, to Geneva. On their way they saw what Mary terms "the Great Waterfall," probably the cascade of Nant d'Arpennas [108] before referred to. To her it seemed to present

> an aspect of singular beauty. The wind carries it away from the rock, and on towards the north, and the fine spray into which it is entirely dissolved passes before the mountain like a mist.[109]

Arrived again at Villa Diodati, the travellers, tired though they must have been, remained conversing with Lord Byron until midnight.

It was probably at this time that Shelley received, in a letter from Peacock, a Celandine, withered in transit from England. He had been "dosing"—the phrase is Byron's—*Childe Harold* with Wordsworth, and it was natural that the faded flower should appear to him an image of the later Wordsworth grown cool toward the aims of the French Revolution, and his earlier hopes for man. The result was

[107] *The Last Man*, iii. 257–8.

[108] Bernard, *Tour*, p. 120.

[109] *Journal*, Sat., July 27, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 145–6.

the following poem which appears in the second Shelley Notebook (formerly Claire Clairmont's), presented by Edward A. Silsbee of Salem, Massachusetts, to Harvard University Library in 1902, and only recently published [110] for the first time by the present writer:

I thought of thee, fair Celandine,
As of a flower aery blue
Yet small—thy leaves methought were wet
With the light of morning dew
In the same glen thy star did shine
As the primrose and the violet,
And the wild briar bent over thee
And the woodland brook danced under thee.

Lovely thou wert in thine own glen
Ere thou didst dwell in song or story
Ere the moonlight of a poet's mind
Had arrayed thee with the glory
Whose fountains are the hearts of men—
Many a thing of vital kind
Had fed and sheltered under thee,
Had nourished their thoughts near to thee

Yes, gentle flower in thy recess
None might a sweeter aspect wear;
Thy young bud drooped so gracefully,
Thou wert so very fair;
Among the fairest ere the stress
Of exile, death and injury,
Thus withering and deforming thee
Had made a mournful type of thee.

A type of that whence I and thou
Are thus familiar, Celandine—

[110] *Boston Herald*, December 21, 1925.

A deathless poet whose young prime
  Was as serene as thine
But he is changed and withered now,
Fallen on a cold and evil time;
His heart is gone—his fame is dim
And Infamy sits mocking him.

Celandine! Thou art pale and dead,
  Changed from thy fresh and woodland state.
Oh! that thy bard were cold, but he
  Has lived too long and late.
Would he were in an honoured grave,
But that, men say, now must not be
Since he for impious gold could sell
The love of those who loved him well.

That he, with all hope else of good
  Should be thus transitory
I marvel not—but that his lays
  Have spared not their own glory
That blood, even the foul god of blood
With most inexpiable praise
Freedom and truth left desolate
He has been bought to celebrate!

They were his hopes which he doth scorn
  They were his foes the fight that won
That sanction and that condemnation
  Are now forever gone.
They need them not! Truth may not mourn
That with a liar's inspiration
Her majesty he did disown
Ere he could overlive his own

They need them not for Liberty
  Justice and philosophic truth

From his divine and simple song
  Shall draw immortal youth
When he and thou shalt cease to be
Or be some other thing, so long
As men may breathe or flowers may blossom
O'er the wide earth's maternal bosom.

The stem whence thou wert disunited
  Since thy poor self was banished hither
Now by the priest of Nature's care
  Who sent thee forth to wither
His window with its blooms has lighted
And I shall see thy brethren there
And each, like thee will aye betoken
Love sold, hope dead, and honour broken.

The poem has a special interest for us in marking the evolution of Shelley's attitude toward Wordsworth which, as we know, began with veneration and even to the end continued toward such earlier work of Wordsworth as *Ruth, To The Small Celandine* and the "Lucy poems," but was altered in so far as Wordsworth's political writings were concerned, as Wordsworth himself drifted away from the Liberals.

On August 2nd Shelley added this final postscript to his journal letter to Peacock:

August 2, 1816.

I have kept this letter some days that you might derive at least the advantage from its magnitude of not receiving another on business,—But not having heard from you in the meantime I send it now.—I write to Hookham by this day's post to inform him that I am to receive money, and that I mean to pay him.—I write also to St. Croix. Be so kind as to write for me to Furiont [? Furnivall] [111] to say that

[111] Mr. George Frederick Furnivall, surgeon at Egham, Eng., who was the attendant physician at the birth of William Shelley, Jan. 24, 1816. Among the

it entirely rose from an omission that his bill was not paid, and that you will speedily settle it for me. The coal man to whom I owe £18 may wait, but it would be as well to speak to him or write to him to assure him of payment. In giving you these commissions I am using the priviledge [*sic*] of a friend, a privilege which the interest I know you take in my concerns and so far as I care for it myself, my reputation will engage you to allow me. They will instruct you also in the continuance of my determination to return to England, and domesticate myself in the home which I hope you are preparing. I enclose you a draft for £25, having heard from Longdill that the sale of my things at Bishopsgate was done by his order, and that I should receive very little from it. Receive it on my account & disburse it at you[r] own discretion. You had better send the draft to the bankers in a letter signed with your name, as I have omitted to insert the word "bearer" lest it might be lost.—If Hookham is curious about me you may show him this letter; I am glad to hear from your account that he does not withhold from me the justice which I am conscious I deserve.

Always yours faithfully
PERCY B. SHELLEY.[112]

With the letter, as he promised, Shelley enclosed a check for £25 [113] and the same day sent the following unpublished letter to his bankers to insure the payment of this sum to Peacock:

Shelley-Brookes correspondence now in the hands of W. T. Spencer, Esq., I find two checks to the Furnivalls, as follows: Jan. 26, 1816, to Mrs. Furnivall or bearer, £10; July 30, 1817, to G. Furnivall, Esq., or bearer, £13. 15. 0. This last payment may have covered the balance of six pounds thought by Dr. F. J. Furnivall to have been left unpaid to his father by Shelley. cf. Ingpen, *Letters*, ii. 697, note.

[112] *Letter from Percy B. Shelley to T. Peacock*, etc. pp. 14–15.

[113] Now in the Brookes-Shelley correspondence in the possession of W. T. Spencer, Esq.

Geneva: August 2, 1816.

Gentlemen

I have sent a draft to T. Peacock Esq. of Great Marlow, payable to him alone, which I request you would have the goodness to honour. I know not whether I have fulfilled the requisite forms in sending such a draft from Geneva as I should have written in London.—If that should be the case, I should be obliged by your considering this letter as a sufficient authority.—The draft is for £25.—

Gentlemen, I have the honour to be
Your obliged Servant
Percy Bysshe Shelley.

[endorsed outside]:
P. B. Shelley
2 Augst. 1816.

[postmarked]:
[Suisse Par
Beffort]

[addressed outside]:
Messrs. Brookes Son & Dixon
25, Chancery Lane
London

1/11. Angleterre[114]

Three days later Shelley issued to Messrs. H. Hentsch et Cie, Byron's Genevese bankers, order for the payment by his bankers in London of the sum of £125:

Geneve le 5. Aout. 1816. B. P. £125.—

A dix jours de datte payer par cette premiere de change a l'ordre de Messieurs H. Hentsch & c. la somme de Cent Vingt cinq livres Sterlings, valeur reçue compotant que passerer sans aucun autre avis de:

Percy Bysshe Shelley

[114] From the original holograph letter in the *Brookes-Shelley Correspondence.*

Messrs. Brookes & Son
25 Chancery Lane
London [115]

a communication of special interest in that it is the only known letter of Shelley's in the French language.

It was probably through Byron's acquaintance with Lewis [116] that on August 14 Shelley and the author of *The Monk* came together at Geneva. Lewis, who had but lately arrived in England from his plantation in the West Indies, had not delayed long in his native land but had set off "with singular abruptness" [117] to carry out a plan previously conceived, of a trip to Italy. On his way thither he stopped at Geneva, and on the 16th visited Ferney with Byron. The evening of the 18th was taken up at Diodati with conversation on the subject of ghosts. "Neither Lord Byron nor M.G.L.," wrote Shelley, seems to believe in them; and . . . both agree, in the very face of reason, that none could believe in ghosts without believing in God. I do not think that all the persons who profess to discredit these visitations, really discredit them; or, if they do in the daylight, are not admonished, by the approach of loneliness and midnight, to think more respectfully of the world of shadows." [118] On the 20th, Shelley, Byron, and Polidori subscribed their names as witnesses to a codicil to Lewis' will.[119] "Lewis was a good man—a clever man, but a bore," [120] Byron wrote, in his *Detached Thoughts*. "My only revenge or consolation used to be setting him by the ears with some vivacious person who hated bores especially."

[115] From the unpublished holograph original in the Brookes-Shelley correspondence.

[116] Cf. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Prothero. ii. 314 and note.

[117] *Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, 1839. ii. 156.

[118] Shelley's *Journal* entry, Sunday, August 18. *Letters*, ii. 514.

[119] *Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*. ii. 163.

[120] *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* ed. Prothero ii. 316, note.

Scott called Lewis "a child, and a spoiled child, but a child of high imagination," who wasted himself on ghost stories and German nonsense, "but who had the finest ear for the rhythm of verse I ever heard—finer than Byron's." [121]

The month of August had been occupied, as we know from Mary's *Journal*, with boating, reading, and visits, once or oftener a day, exchanged between the Campagne Montalegre and the Villa Diodati. The joy Shelley had had in 1812 in sending up fire balloons over the Bristol Channel continued here; and on Sunday, August 4, Mary wrote: "we go out in the boat to set up the balloon, but there is too much wind; we set it up from the land, but it takes fire as soon as it is up." [122] Shelley's health had greatly improved in the open in Switzerland and his spirits were high.

Such an idyllic existence could not be expected to continue. Two days before the balloon-launching, news had reached them from Shelley's attorney, Longdill, that Shelley's presence was required in England. The reason for the summons is not certain; but it was probably sent to oblige Shelley to receive payment in England of the half-yearly portion of his £800 allowance. At the prospect of leaving Switzerland, Mary and Shelley were both deeply depressed. English society had not been kind to the runaway lovers; and when they had deserted it a second time in the preceding spring it had been with the intent to set up a home on the Continent. "I leave England—perhaps forever," Shelley had written Godwin at that time.

The twenty-ninth of August, nine o'clock in the morning, beheld them with their Swiss nurse-girl, Elise, making their way out of Geneva. Passing through Les Rousses, which in the spring preceding they had found buried in snow, they

[121] *Ibid.* ii. 317, note.
[122] *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 147.

came that evening upon Moray, a neat, clean little place that had reminded an earlier traveller of a town of North Wales.[123] Through avenues of fir-trees they went forward, on the following day, through Arbois, Poligny, Genlis, and Auxonne, to Dôle.

From Dôle on the 31st they advanced to Rouvray, by way of Dijon, once the residence of the sovereigns of Burgundy, and in 1816 the chief city in the department of the Côte d'Or, with a population of approximately 22,000 persons. As far as Dijon their route had retraced that taken by them in May; but from that town they issued by a different course through France by Auxerre, Villeneuve le Guiard, and Fontainebleau (September 2nd) to Versailles (3rd), where Shelley delivered himself of what some may esteem as the *ultimum verbum* on the palace:

> Could a Grecian architect have commanded all the labour and money which was expended on Versailles, he would have produced a fabric which the whole world has never equalled.[124]

Its vacant rooms were for Shelley only another symbol of "the hollow show of monarchy." The travellers next visited Rouen, and Shelley confessed that he was disappointed with the interior of the Cathedral. The night of the 4th of September was spent at Yvetot; and on the 5th they reached Havre. Contrary winds detained them for two days at the port, but on the 8th, after a wretched voyage of twenty-six hours, they reached Portsmouth.

[123] Bernard, *Tour*. p. 107.

[124] Cf. Shelley's letter to Byron, from Portsmouth, September 8, 1816: "We passed . . . through Versailles, and Fountainebleau, and stayed to visit those famous palaces, which, as I will hereafter tell you, are well worth visiting as monuments of human power; grand, yet somewhat faded; the latter is the scene of some of the most interesting events of what may be called the master theme of the epoch in which we live—the French Revolution." *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, etc., ed. Murray, 1922, ii. 15.

CHAPTER XII

BATH AND MARLOW

Death of Harriet—Suit in Chancery.

IN an endeavor to keep the secret of Claire's folly from her mother and William Godwin, Mary now [1] took the girl, their Swiss nurse, and little William Shelley to Bath, where they went into lodgings; while Shelley lost no time in proceeding directly to London. Peacock's assistance had already been enlisted, as we have seen, in an attempt to secure a house for Shelley at or near Peacock's town, Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire; and during the second and third weeks of September Shelley, and from the 20th to the 24th Mary also, partook of his friend's hospitality. The season, according to Peacock, was one "of unbroken sunshine"—a truly remarkable phenomenon in England—and he and Shelley making the most of it, "took every day a long excursion, either on foot or on the water." [2]

"On September 24, 1816, in consideration of the transfer of Richard Whitton [3] into the name of the poet of £3500 three-per-cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities, Shelley mortgaged to Richard Whitton his reversionary interests in the estates comprised in the Settlements of 1782 and 1791." [4] The elder Whitton, in order to provide Shelley with funds of which he stood in urgent need, advanced a sum to be subtracted later

[1] The party was delayed for a day at the English customs house at Dover, and did not go its separate ways until September 9th.

[2] Peacock, *Works*, iii. 426–7.

[3] A son of Sir Timothy's attorney (William Whitton), Richard, acted in this case as trustee for Sir Timothy.

[4] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. p. 470.

from £1700, the proceeds of the sale of the stock. This was done with the express stipulation that Shelley must pay off all his debts. On this date Shelley made his will designating Byron and Peacock as trustees to pay out of his estate £6000 to his wife Harriet; to hold in trust for his son, Charles Bysshe Shelley, £5000 until the boy should attain his majority, whereupon the whole sum should be paid him; to hold for and later pay to Ianthe Shelley an additional sum of £5000; to pay Mary Jane ("Claire") Clairmont £6000, and to supply her also with an annuity—the product of another bequest of £6000 which latter bequest at her death could be extended by Claire to the life of another person she might appoint to receive it; to pay £2000 to each of his two friends, Hogg and Byron; to pay £500 to Peacock and also to invest £2000 to secure an annuity for Peacock during his life and the life of another person Peacock might designate. The residue of his real and personal estate was bequeathed to Mary Godwin; and to protect this bequest it was stipulated that Harriet Shelley should in accepting of the bequest before-mentioned, automatically forfeit all right to claim a dower out of Shelley's real estate. He also gave the priority of claim under the will to Mary Godwin, and opened the way for her to defer the payment of any of the legacies for four years after his decease if she would instead and for the period only pay interest on these legacies at the rate of 4 *per cent. per annum*.[5] On February 18, 1817, Harriet's death having intervened, he drew a new will, increasing the sums willed in trust for Charles Bysshe and Ianthe to £6000 and provided that the same sum should be held in trust for and subsequently paid to William Shelley.

After this settlement of his affairs, Shelley and Mary re-

[5] The original draft of this will, drawn in Switzerland, is in the collection of Mr. Carl H. Pforzheimer.

turned to Bath, and on the 29th Shelley wrote Byron on a subject just now—in the hour of the first published edition of *Astarte*—of special interest. Rumors had been set afloat in London respecting Byron's relations with his half-sister, the Hon. Augusta Leigh; rumors perhaps born of the public's reading into *The Bride of Abydos* of certain material imagined to be autobiography.[6] "I saw Kinnaird," wrote Shelley, "and had a long talk with him. He informed me that Lady Byron was now in perfect health, that she was living with your sister. I felt much pleasure from this intelligence. I consider the latter part of it as affording a decisive contradiction to the only important calumny that ever was advanced against you. On this ground, at least, it will become the world hereafter to be silent." [7]

That Shelley should write to Byron in this strain would seem to indicate that Byron had not unbosomed himself to Shelley in the manner said by the author of *Astarte* to have been common enough to Byron at that time in his discussion of his intimacy with his half-sister. Second, it is a most valuable index to Shelley's personal attitude toward intercourse "within the forbidden degrees" of consanguinity. If he had not felt that these charges constituted an "important calumny" upon the character of Lord Byron he would not have written thus nor would he have endeavored to clear his friend's reputation from the stain of such a charge. Certainly it helps us to believe that when Shelley explained in the preface of *Laon and Cythna* that he had treated of such criminal intercourse in his poem only in order "to startle the reader from the trance of ordinary life" he meant what he said. And I think, too, that Shelley's note,

[6] See *Astarte: a Fragment of Truth Concerning George Gordon Byron, Sixth Lord Byron. Recorded by his Grandson Ralph Milbanke, Earl of Lovelace.* 1921. pp. 34–35.

[7] Fragment of a letter, from Bath, September 29, 1816. *Letters,* ii. 522.

appended to this preface as an afterthought, in which, anticipating calumniating rumors of the sort that Lord Byron had endured, he denied that the relations of Laon and Cythna had any bearing on his own private life, he was possibly thinking of Byron, *The Bride of Abydos*, and Augusta Leigh.

In the same letter of Byron, of which the full text has only lately been available, he minimises the effect which scandal can have upon the estate of the true man of genius; and in a stirring appeal to Byron's best and highest self indicated the path which he believed that this D'Artagnan of English letters should hew for himself. Says Shelley:

I cannot look on these calumnies in the serious light which others do. They appear to be innocent from their very extravagance, if they were not still more so from their silliness. They are the sparks of a straw fire, that vanish when their fuel fails. You are destined, believe me, to assume a rank in the estimation of mankind where such puerile hostilities cannot reach. There wants nothing but that you should clearly feel, and not disdain to pursue this destination, to deliver you at once from all these inquietudes which the opinion of the fickle multitude delights to inflict upon too sensitive minds. .You are now in Italy—you have, perhaps, forgotten all that my unwelcome anxiety reminds you of. You contemplate objects that elevate, inspire, tranquillise. You communicate the feelings, which arise out of that contemplation, to mankind; perhaps to the men of distant ages. Is there nothing in the hope of being the parent of greatness, and of goodness, which is destined, perhaps, to expand indefinitely? Is there nothing in making yourself a fountain from which the thoughts of other men shall draw strength and beauty, to excite the ambition of a mind that can despise all other ambition? You have already given evidence of very uncommon powers. Having produced thus much, with effort, as you are aware, very disproportionate to the result; what are you not further capable of effecting? What would the human race have been if Homer, Shakespeare, had never written? or if any

false modesty, or mistake of their own powers, had withheld them from consummating those unequalled achievements of mind by which we are so deeply benefited? I do not compare you with these. I do not know how great an intellectual compass you are destined to fill. I only know that your powers are astonishingly great, and that they ought to be exerted to their full extent.

It is not that I should counsel you to aspire to fame. The motive to your labours ought to be more pure, and simple. You ought to desire no more than to express your own thoughts; to address yourself to the sympathy of those who might think with you. Fame will follow those whom it is unworthy to lead. I would not that you should immediately apply yourself to the composition of an Epic Poem; or to whatever other work you should collect all your being to consummate. I would not that the natural train of your progress should be interrupted; or any step of it anticipated. I delight in much of what you have already done. I hope for much more, in the same careless spirit of ardent sentiment. I hope for no more than that you should, from some moment when the clearness of your own mind makes evident to you the "truth of things," feel that you are chosen out from all other men to some great enterprise of thought; and that all your studies should, from that moment, tend towards that enterprise alone: that your affections, that all worldly hopes this world may have left you, should link themselves to this design. *What* it should be, I am not qualified to say. In a more presumptuous mood, I recommended the Revolution of France as a theme involving pictures of all that is best qualified to interest and to instruct mankind. But it is inconsistent with the spirit in which you ought to devote yourself to so great a destiny, that you should make use of any understanding but your own—much less mine.[8]

Now that Shelley had brought his negotiations with his father to some sort of conclusion, he was besieged by Godwin, through letters from Fanny, to help him in his distress.

[8] *Lord Byron's Correspondence.* etc., ed. Murray, 1922. i. 18–19; and cf. *Ibid.* 169: "You have now arrived," etc.

While they were yet in Switzerland Fanny had written to remind Shelley that one of Godwin's obligations, a note for £300, due to be paid to one Kingdon "at the end of June" was still unpaid, and that concern over it had given Godwin not a few sleepless nights. This, Fanny assured Shelley, was most unfortunate; for Godwin was at work under contract to conclude his novel, *Mandeville, or a Tale of the Seventeenth Century*, by January 1st, 1817; and if sleeplessness and ill-health were to continue he could not possibly finish his tale. Failure meant that Constable, with whom Godwin had made the contract, and who had given Godwin an advance of £200 on the projected work, would press for the repayment of this sum, already swallowed up in repayment of another such advance. On the 26th of September Fanny requested Shelley to notify Godwin at the earliest possible hour of the outcome of the negotiations with Sir Timothy. By October 2 Shelley, who in accordance with his father's demands, had been settling his debts, found that he could not possibly give Godwin £300, as he had promised to do, since there remained after the payment of his debts, but £248 to his credit. Of this sum, however, he informed Godwin, he was sending a sum "within a few pounds" of that amount.[9] Godwin, who had expected the £300, was disturbed and angry at receipt of a lesser sum.

Fanny, whose nature was not like that of Godwin—egotistical, selfish, grasping, and hypocritical—must have tired of her rôle as mediator in these trying interchanges of pleas and regrets and explanations. She must have grown weary of Godwin's whining and begging, and Mrs. Godwin's coolness, and the absence of Mary and Claire. When she learned, as she

[9] I imagine that Shelley's check for £200, made out to "Joseph Hume or bearer" on Oct. 7, 1816, was the check enclosed by Shelley in the letter to Godwin, for at an earlier time this same Hume had been involved in negotiations for the relief of Godwin, instigated by Shelley.

did about this time,[10] the true story of her birth, and felt, especially in such distressing times as those the Godwins had been facing, that she was only an added incumbrance in a home which had *never* in any real sense been a home to her, and in which not even one person could claim actual kinship with her, she must have indulged melancholy over her most wayward fate. "My aunt Everina will be in London next week," [11] she had written to Mary on July 29, 1816, and she added that at that time her fate would be decided. "I shall then give you a full and clear account of what my unhappy life is to be spent in," she said. At the close of this letter her economic dependence upon the Godwins is hinted at sadly in the words: "I have not a *sou* of my own." Her health had not been of the best. "I am not well," she told them, "my mind always keeps my body in a fever"; but lest this revelation should worry them she hastened to add: "but never mind me." [12]

Apparently no one *did* "mind" very much; and as Fanny had if anything an over-abundance of those qualities of "sensibility" and "delicacy of sentiment" which her mother had wished she might have; and as these were characteristics ill-adapted to strengthen her to meet the rude buffetings of fortune which from 1804 [13] to 1816 had shaken the Godwin household, the last chapter of her existence, which now moved rapidly to a termination, opened on the cumulation of those forces which in the end were to overwhelm her. "In September 1816" says Kegan Paul, "Mrs. Bishop and Everina Woll-

[10] Kegan Paul, *William Godwin, His Friends and Contemporaries.* ii.243–4.
[11] *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* i. 153.
[12] *Ibid.* i. 155.
[13] The year in which, as has been previously explained, Godwin began to play the mendicant.

stonecraft [14] were in London, and saw a good deal of Godwin and his family. They left London on September 24th, and it was arranged that Fanny should follow her aunts early in October, and spend some time with the relatives of whom she had seen so little." The meeting point arranged was apparently South Wales, whence they would proceed to Ireland from Bristol or Haverfordwest.[15]

Writing to Mary on the 26th Fanny confessed that Godwin's health and his worries over his indebtedness made her "very anxious for him." [16] It is possible that Mrs. Godwin reminded Fanny about this time that Godwin's poor health was due in part at least to the efforts he had expended in order to secure the means of her maintenance.[17] With such burdens on her mind Fanny set out, in the latter part of the first week of October, for Bristol. On Wednesday the 9th, Mary wrote in her *Journal:* "In the evening a very alarming letter comes from Fanny. Shelley goes immediately to Bristol; we sit up for him till 2 in the morning, when he returns, but brings no particular news." The next day's entry recorded: "Shelley goes again to Bristol, and obtains more certain trace." Godwin heard, on the same day, from Fanny at Bristol the fearsome intelligence: "I depart immediately to the dark spot from which I hope never to remove." [18] He, too, rushed to Bristol.

In the meantime, as we now know, Fanny, in fulfilment of her promise conveyed to Godwin, had left Bristol and gone to

[14] Sisters of Mary Wollstonecraft. Their home was in Dublin.

[15] Kegan Paul, *William Godwin*, etc. ii. 241.

[16] *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 162.

[17] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ii. 57, note.

[18] *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 167. The letter was written on Tuesday the 8th.

Swansea, where on the night of the 9th she took tea and retired to rest, "telling the chambermaid she was exceedingly fatigued, and would take care of the candle herself." [19] The next morning, when she did not appear, the landlord forced the door of her room and found that by aid of laudanum Fanny Imlay had been true to her most fatal word.

Beside her, as she lay locked in the sleep that knows no ending, they found the note, penned in her hand:

> I have long determined that the best thing I could do was to put an end to the existence of a being whose birth was unfortunate, and whose life has only been a series of pains to those persons who have hurt their health in endeavouring to promote her welfare. Perhaps to hear of my death may give you pain, but you will soon have the blessing of forgetting that such a creature ever existed . . .

An inquest, which revealed nothing, was reported in *The Cambrian* (? Bristol) on Saturday, October 19, 1816.[20]

"I am particularly attached to her," Mary Wollstonecraft had written of her baby girl in 1796; "I feel more than a mother's fondness and anxiety when I reflect on the dependent and oppressed state of her sex. I dread lest she should be forced to sacrifice her heart to her principles, or principles to her heart.—I dread to unfold her mind, lest it should render her unfit for the world she is to inhabit—Hapless woman! what a fate is thine!" [21] Thus out of the agony of her own spirit the unhappy mother with prophetic insight foretold her daughter's tragic end.

[19] From *The Cambrian,* Sat., Oct. 12, 1816, quoted, Kegan Paul, *William Godwin,* ii. 241.

[20] Fanny's suicide was treated fictionally by Mary in *The Last Man,* i. 280 ff.: "It was as I said the nineteenth of October," etc.

[21] *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.* 1796. p. 66.

The effects of the awful event upon the households at 41 Skinner Street, London, and 5 Abbey Churchyard, Bath, were various. Godwin appeared more concerned about preventing the news of it from reaching his London acquaintances than he was about exhibiting either love or regret for his ward. Mrs. Godwin's reactions are unknown and perhaps better so. Mary's entries in her *Journal* are brief; but rather with the brevity of tenderness and suppressed emotion, and Claire, who had not hitherto displayed any especial fondness for Fanny, was shocked by the horror of this suicide.

But Shelley was deeply shaken by the death of Fanny. There is but one reference in any extant letters of the poet, written after the event, to indicate his emotions on the subject, and that is a parenthetical one in a letter to Byron, from London, Jan. 17, 1817, in which, announcing other events of dire consequence he concludes: "(yet one thing happened in the autumn that affected me more deeply [22])." Afterward in these brief lines of verse, Shelley enshrined his regretful remembrance of his last meeting with Fanny in London, September 1816: [23]

> Her voice did quiver as we parted,
> Yet knew I not that heart was broken
> From which it came, and I departed
> Heeding not the words when spoken.
> Misery—O Misery,
> This world is all too wide for thee.

Medwin says that on occasions when the subject of suicide was

[22] *Lord Byron's Correspondence.* ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 30.

[23] Cf. Shelley's description of what occurred at the interview with Fanny. Letter to Byron, from 26 Marchmont Street, London, Sept. 11, 1816. *Lord Byron's Correspondence.* ed. Murray. 1922, ii. 17.

under discussion, Shelley "fell into a mood, most distressing to witness, was affected with a prostration of spirits that bent him to the earth, a melancholy too sacred to notice, and which it would have been a vain attempt to dissipate." [24]

When Shelley had gone up to London from Portsmouth in September he had had a commission to perform in that city for Byron. The MS. of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, written by Byron in Switzerland and transcribed by Claire Clairmont, had been entrusted to Shelley to be conveyed to Byron's publisher, John Murray. "I was thrilled with delight yesterday," Murray wrote, September 12, "by the announcement of Mr. Shelley with the MS. of Childe Harold." [25] With the MS. was delivered to Murray a letter from Byron saying: "I know not well to whom to consign the correction of the proofs, nor indeed who would be good-natured enough to overlook it in its progress, as I feel that it should be published with as few *errata* as possible. Perhaps my friend Mr. Moore (if in town) would do this. If not Mr. S[helley] will take it on himself, and in any case he is authorized to act for me in treating with you, etc., etc., on this subject." [26]

Shelley evidently understood that Byron wished him to read the proofs of the poem, for on the 2nd of October he wrote Murray, requesting him to forward them to him at his Bath address. "I shall remain here probably during the whole winter," he told the publisher, "and you may depend on

[24] *Revised Life of Shelley*, ed. H. B. Forman. 1913. p. 237.

[25] E. C. Mayne, *Byron*. ii. 83; and see also Shelley's letters to Byron, Sept. 8, 11, and 29, and Nov. 20, 1816. *Lord Byron's Correspondence*. ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 15–17, 21.

[26] Letter from Diodati, Aug. 28, 1816, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Prothero. iii. 345–6.

no attention being spared on my part to render the proofs as correct as possible." [27] What was Shelley's surprise, therefore, on noting, probably in the *Morning Chronicle* for October 29, an announcement from Murray that on the 23rd of November the Third Canto and *The Prisoner of Chillon* would appear simultaneously. He immediately addressed the publisher, protesting: "I should not do my duty to Lord Byron, who entrusted me with the MSS. of his Poems, if I did not remind you that it was his particular desire that I should revise the proofs before publication." [28] Murray had not answered his former letter, he said, and he now urged him to acknowledge receipt of this second communication. Apparently the publisher did not deviate from his original plan, and, Gifford having overseen the proofs, the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* was published November 18. Shelley himself suspected that the cause of Murray's action might be "some ill will" arising from a misunderstanding on the publisher's part as to the sum Byron was to receive for the MS. of this Canto. Murray thought the price agreed upon had been 1200 guineas; but Shelley had held him to the price which Byron asked and expected—2000 guineas.[29]

In the winter succeeding Murray displayed his real attitude toward Shelley in two undated letters to John Wilson Croker, the famous critic and editor of the *Quarterly Review*. In the first of these, accompanying a copy of *Laon and Cythna*, he declared the poem "an avowed defence of Incest," and termed its author "the vilest wretch now living." In the other, which went to Croker with copies of the 1813 edition of *Queen Mab*

[27] *Letters*. ii. 524.

[28] *Letters*. ii. 525.

[29] Letter of Shelley to Byron, from 5 Abbey Churchyard, Bath, Nov. 20, 1816. *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, etc. ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 21.

Albemarle Street
Tuesday

Dear Sir

I send you a few Copies of the Poems—printed separately.

I also send a Copy of a Poem—which I sent you under a different title before—under a New Name & a great many cancelled lines—which you may discover by the different colour of the Paper—& which I have endeavoured to match at the beginning of the book.

AN UNPUBLISHED

Owner and P
To the Cr
The poem referred to at the beginning
altered version of *Laon and*
The other "suppressed Poem of the same

I also send another - suppressed
Poems of the same Author - pray
shut them all out of the way -
I will call & tell you tomorrow - all about the wild
Author.

I am ever D^r Sir
most truly Yo^r

Jno Murray

M JOHN MURRAY

Quarterly Review
n Croker.
ragraph was *The Revolt of Islam*, the
Revolution of the Golden City.
ueen Mab, privately printed by Shelley

and the revised form of *Laon and Cythna* (*The Revolt of Islam*) he assured Croker that he would call on him on the following day and tell him "all about the vile author," who was "Godwin's new son-in-law."

Seven thousand copies of this canto were sold by Murray to the book-sellers of London in *one day*. But of the first small edition of *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*, published in March of the preceding year, scarcely a copy had been sold. Some copies, indeed, remained unsold as late as 1820. This cold reception of his work might well have discouraged a stronger spirit than Shelley's; its poignancy for him was tragic. To Leigh Hunt on December 8th he unveiled his disappointment. Hunt had asked him whether he would not acknowledge the authorship of the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* which he had sent to him to be published in *The Examiner*. He replied:

. . . will I own the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"? I do not care—as you like. And yet the poem was composed under the influence of feelings which agitated me even to tears, so that I think it deserves a better fate than the being linked with so stigmatised and unpopular a name (so far as it is known) as mine. You will say that it is not thus, that I am morbidly sensitive to what I esteem the injustice of neglect—but I do not say that I am unjustly neglected, the oblivion which overtook my little attempt of "Alastor" I am ready to acknowledge was sufficiently merited in *itself;* but then it was not accorded in the correct proportion considering the success of the most contemptible drivellings. I am undeceived in the belief that I have powers deeply to interest, or substantially to improve, mankind. How far my conduct and my opinions have rendered the zeal and ardour with which I have engaged in the attempt ineffectual, I know not. Self-love prompts me to assign much weight to a cause which perhaps has none. But thus much I do not seek to conceal from myself, that I am an outcast from human society; my name is execrated by all who

understand its entire import—by those very beings whose happiness I ardently desire. I am an object of compassion to a few more benevolent than the rest, all else abhor and avoid me.[30]

To Shelley, weltering in such a Slough of Despond, came the kindly and sympathetic review of the early poems of Keats, Shelley, and Reynolds which Hunt published in the *Examiner* of December 1, 1816,[31] under the title: "Young Poets." In this first public review of the poetical work of either Keats or Shelley,[32] Hunt, rejoicing that some few poets [33] of the day were wise enough to "go directly to Nature for Inspiration," he said of Shelley:

> Of the first who came before us, we have, it is true, yet seen only one or two specimens [of his work] and these were no sooner sent us than we unfortunately mislaid them; but we shall procure what he has published, and if the rest answer to what we have seen, we shall have no hesitation in announcing him for a very striking and original thinker. His name is PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, and he is the author of a poetical work entitled *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude.*

Shelley seems to have heard of the review first from Hunt himself. "By some fatality," he wrote regretfully to Hunt from Marlow on December 8, "I have seen every *Examiner*, but that of last week. Since I received your letter yesterday, I have made every exertion to get a sight of it, unsuccessfully. All the people who take it in here have forwarded it to their friends at a distance. I hear there is one at a village five miles off; as it is very uncertain whether I shall be able to procure it, I will accept your kind offer of sending it to me." Hunt's kindness to him stirred him to say: "Your letters—give me

[30] *Letters*, ii. 529–30.

[31] pp. 761–2.

[32] Or, so far as I am aware, of Keats's friend, Reynolds.

[33] Including the Byron of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold.*

I send you a most extraordinary Poem by Godwin's new Son-in-Law — pray keep it under Lock & Key — it is an avowed Defence of Incest — the Author is the ablest writer in existence, except with Lord Byron — the Book was published & he is now endeavouring to suppress it —

I send Beelzebub's two Letters.

Dear Sir, I am

most faithfully yr

John Murray

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER FROM JOHN MURRAY

Owner and Publisher of *The Quarterly Review*.
To the Critic, John Wilson Croker.

The "extraordinary Poem" was *Laon and Cythna; or the Revolution of the Golden City*, 1817.

The satirical reference to "Godwin's new son-in-law" was, of course, owing to Shelley's marriage with Mary, in December, 1816, after Harriet's suicide, and after Shelley had lived out of wedlock with Mary for more than two years.

unmingled pleasure, and that of a very exalted kind. I have not in all my intercourse with mankind experienced sympathy and kindness with which I have been so affected or which my whole being has so sprung forward to meet and to return—let me talk with you as with an old friend." [34]

He told Hunt he had read *The Story of Rimini* [35] and had been "exceedingly delighted" with it; that the story had "an interest of a very uncommon and irresistible character"; but he was critical enough to discern in it the subjection of the author "to some rules in the composition" which fettered the genius otherwise visible in the work. Hunt had commended Peacock's *Headlong Hall;* and Shelley reported Peacock's pleasure in the approbation thus bestowed. "He is an amiable man of great learning, considerable taste, an enemy to every shape of tyranny and superstitious imposture," Shelley assured Hunt. He hoped he might soon be able to introduce his two friends to each other at Albion House, Great Marlow, "among these woody hills, these sweet green fields, and [by] this delightful river." [36]

Hunt was "in distress for a few hundred Pounds" and had let Shelley know it. The latter, to whom a bond of friendship was equivalent to a *carte blanche* upon his own resources, imagined his friends would act from the same principle; and so, not being able to aid Hunt immediately to the extent of a considerable loan he sent him £5 [37] and suggested that as Lord Byron at Geneva had "expressed . . . the high esteem . . . he felt for Hunt's character and worth" he did not "[think] that he would hesitate in contributing at least £100 towards extricating one whom he regards so highly from a state of em-

[34] *Letters,* ii. 529.
[35] Published by Hunt in 1816.
[36] *Letters,* ii. 531.
[37] The check dated Dec. 9th is among the Brookes-Shelley papers.

barrassment." If Hunt felt "any delicacy on the subject" would he permit him to write Byron in his behalf, Shelley asked?

Some years later Shelley declared that none more than Hunt knew "better both how to recieve [*sic*] & to confer a benefit though he must ever confer more than he can recieve." [38] The praise might well be applied to its author at this point; for this was the graceful presentation speech which accompanied the £5 already mentioned: "There is some little literary luxury, some enjoyment of taste or fancy you have refused yourself, because you have not felt, through the difficulty of your situation, that you were entitled to indulge yourself in it. You are entreated, and a refusal would give me more pain than you are willing to inflict—to employ the enclosed in making yourself a present of this luxury." [39]

> What is this world's delight?
> Lightning that mocks the night,
> Brief even as bright,

sang Shelley, five years later, and the lines, or those of the song, "Rarely, rarely comest thou, Spirit of Delight" might apply as we face the gray days that now immediately followed for him.

"I am truly miserable, my dear friend," Harriet Shelley had written to Catherine Nugent, January 24, 1815; and she continued pathetically:

> I really see no termination to my sorrows. As to Mr. Shelley, I know nothing of him. He neither sends nor comes to see me. I am still at my father's, which is very wretched. When I shall quit this

[38] From the original MS. first draft of the dedication to the *Cenci* in the Pforzheimer collection.

[39] *Letters*, ii. 532.

house I know not. Everything goes against me. I am weary of life. I am so restrained here that life is scarcely worth having.—For myself happiness is fled. I live for others. At nineteen I could descend a willing victim to the tomb. How I wish those dear children had never been born. They stay my fleeting spirit, when It would be in another state. How many there are who shudder at death. I have been so near it that I feel no terrors.—Oh! Catherine, you do not know what it is to be left as I am, a prey to anguish, corroding sorrow, with a mind too sensitive to other's pain. But I will think no more. There is madness in thought. Could I look into futurity for a short time how gladly would I pierce the veil of mystery that wraps my fate. Is it wrong, do you think, to put an end to one's sorrows? I often think of it—all is so gloomy and desolate. Shall I find repose in another world? Oh grave, why do you not tell us what is beyond thee? [40]

About September 9, 1816, the date that Shelley started from Portsmouth to London, Harriet, who in the meantime had left her father's house, perhaps being debarred therefrom by her sister,[41] because the latter desired to secure the whole of the Westbrook fortune,[42] took lodgings at the house of Mrs. Jane Thomas, a widow, at 7 Elizabeth Street, Hans Place, Chelsea. Two months later, the exact date was Saturday, November 9, she sat down and despatched the following letter to Eliza Westbrook:

Sat. eve,

My Dearest and much Beloved Sister,[43]—When you read this

[40] *Letters of Harriet Shelley to Catherine Nugent.* 1889. 62–4.

[41] Kegan Paul, *William Godwin.* ii. 244.

[42] From an unpublished passage in a letter from Shelley to Mary, Dec. 15, 1816. And cf. also Shelley's statement to Byron. In letter from London, Jan. 17, 1817: "The sister (i. e. Eliza Westbrook) of whom you have heard me speak may be truly said (though not in law, yet in fact) to have murdered her for the sake of her father's money." *Lord Byron's Correspondence.* ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 30.

[43] This salutation, and the tone of this letter, to my mind mitigate strongly

let^r. I shall be no more an inhabitant of this miserable world. Do not regret the loss of one who could never be anything but a source of vexation and misery to you all belonging to me. Too wretched to exert myself, lowered in the opinion of everyone, why should I drag on a miserable existence? embittered by past recollections and not one ray of hope to rest on for the future. The remembrance of all your kindness which I have so unworthily repaid has often made my heart ache. I know that you will forgive me—because it is not in your nature to be unkind or severe to any. Dear amiable woman that I had never left you, oh! that I had always taken your advice. I might have lived long and happy, but weak and unsteady have rushed on to my destruction. I have not written to Bysshe. Oh, no, what would it avail, my wishes or my prayers would not be attended to by him, and yet should he rec. this, perhaps he might grant my request to let Ianthe remain with you always. Dear lovely child, with you she will enjoy much happiness, with him none. My dear Bysshe, let me conjure you by the remembrance of our days of happiness to grant my last wish. Do not take your innocent child from Eliza who has been more than I have, who has watched over her with such unceasing care. Do not refuse my last request, I never could refuse you and if you had never left me I might have lived, but as it is I freely forgive you and may you enjoy that happiness which you have deprived me of. There is your beautiful boy, oh! be careful of him, and his love may prove one day a rich reward. As you form his infant mind so will you reap the fruits hereafter. Now comes the sad task of saying farewell. Oh! I must be quick. God bless and watch over you all. You dear Bysshe and you dear Eliza. May all happiness attend ye both is the last wish of her who loved ye more than all others. My children—I dare not trust myself there, they are too young to regret me and ye will be kind to them for their own sakes more than mine. My parents—do not regret me, I was unworthy of your love and care. Be

against acceptance of the story that Harriet had for any cause, been driven from her home by her sister, as alleged by Kegan Paul, and as early as 1817, by Shelley.

happy all of ye, so shall my spirit find rest and forgiveness. God bless you is the last prayer of the unfortunate

HARRIET S.

To you my dear Sister I leave all my things; as they more properly belong to you than anyone and you will preserve them for Ianthe. God bless you both.[44]

On the same day, after dining early (about 4 o'clock) by special arrangement, she left her rooms and was not heard of again.[45] Shelley wrote Hookham, about the middle of November, for some information of Harriet and his children, but Hookham could give him no news, being unable to secure any.[46]

On Tuesday morning, December 10, as he passed along the Serpentine River in Hyde Park, John Levesey, an out-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital, observed the body of Harriet Shelley afloat in the stream. The corpse was removed, through an old wooden gate that yielded not seldom before such a solemn cortège, to the Fox and Bull inn nearby, where an inquest was conducted on Wednesday, December 11th, and when the allegation was made by Harriet's former landlady, Mrs. Jane Thomas, that Harriet at the time of her death, appeared to be *enceinte*. This statement appeared in the *Times* for the following day, and though offset first by the declaration made at the inquest by Mrs. Thomas' servant that "she saw nothing but what was proper" in Harriet's conduct; and second by the absence of other reference at the inquest supporting it, it may have been the case.

In a transcript made by H. Buxton Forman,[47] of Shelley's

[44] Letter published for the first time in *Cornhill Magazine*, Jan. 1922. by W. Courthope Forman.

[45] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*. 476–7.

[46] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ii. 67.

[47] Courtesy of E. Byrne Hackett of the Brick Row Bookshop, owner of the MS.

letter to Mary, from London, Dec. 15, 1816, a passage missing from the published [48] texts of this letter appears, thus: "It seems that this poor woman—the most innocent of her abhorred and unnatural family—was driven from her father's house, and descended the steps of prostitution until she lived with a groom of the name of Smith, who deserting her, she killed herself. There can be no question that the beastly viper her sister, unable to gain profit from her connexion with her, has secured to herself the fortune of the old man—who is now dying—by the murder of this poor creature." If Harriet had been in part a dependent upon her father, and if Shelley himself affirmed in this letter she was cut off from even this support, her loss of virtue may be extenuated though of course not excused. Shelley's abandonment of her had been sudden, selfish, deliberate. When she could no longer maintain herself honorably Harriet put as sudden an end to her life. It is useless for any Shelley biographer to pretend that all the wordy incantations, or fragrant perfumes of Arabia can cleanse the hand of the poet from the original responsibility for the state of the spirit which induced this crime.

English law was then harsh upon the suicide. Burial at the cross-roads at the end of Grosvenor Place was the rule for those who had destroyed themselves in this district, even as late as 1823.[49] But Harriet had been acquainted with Mary Ann Phillips, daughter of Thomas Phillips, landlord of the Fox and Bull, and on this account her remains were spared the revolting burial the law must otherwise have demanded.[50]

[48] The passage has lately been restored by Thomas J. Wise, Esq., owner of the original letter. *Shelley Library*, 1925.

[49] Davis, *Memorials of Knightsbridge*. p. 237.

[50] *Ibid.* 112–13.

During the inquest the deceased girl was referred to as Harriet Smith, and her real name does not appear in any document relating to the hearing.

The first intelligence to reach Shelley concerning the tragedy was that contained in a letter from Hookham, December 13, written after the inquest and probably also after the last rites had been said over the body of the unfortunate girl. It reached him on the 15th at Bath to which after a short visit with Peacock at Marlow and Hunt at Hampstead, he had returned on the day preceding. He went at once to London, Professor Dowden says, "to claim his children." This seems to have been his principal concern; for he could now do nothing more for Harriet. His consideration, therefore, for that sphere in which he would in that hour be most useful is commendable enough. But one cannot avoid regretting that in the letter he wrote to Mary on December 15 there is so much self-absorption and self-pity, while throughout the letter there is not the slightest token—a word of regret for this so-fearful an end of a life of but twenty summers, or a faint hint of affection for her with whom he had lived for three years, and who had been the mother of his first-born. On these subjects he preserves a reticence that leaves us cold, amazed, wondering. Not that he should have indulged hysterics—to imagine it were a folly equal to Shelley's own unreasonable demand upon Harriet that she should have exhibited more emotion during an operation performed on Ianthe—; but that one should see the curtain fall upon this last scene of all of this eventful tragedy without one hint of a tenderness in Shelley toward his first wife is, to say the least, disappointing to one who had hoped that certainly at this point Shelley would show himself in his usual aspects of kindliness and sympathy.

"I have spent a day, my beloved," he writes Mary, "of

somewhat agonizing sensations, such as the contemplation of vice and folly and hard-heartedness, exceeding all conception, must produce. Leigh Hunt has been with me all day, and his delicate and tender attentions to me, his kind speeches of you, have sustained me against the weight of the horror of this event.

"The children I have not got. I have seen Longdill, who recommends proceeding with the utmost caution and resoluteness; he seems interested. I told him I was under contract of marriage to you, and he said that, in such an event, all pretence to detain the children would cease. Hunt said very delicately that this would be soothing intelligence to you. Yes, my only hope, my darling love, this will be one among the innumerable benefits which you will have bestowed upon me, and which will still be inferior in value to the greatest benefit —yourself. It is through you that I can entertain without despair the recollection of the horrors of unutterable villainy that led to this dark, dreadful death.

"Everything tends to prove, however, that beyond the shock of so hideous a catastrophe having fallen on a human being once so nearly connected with me, there would in any case have been little to regret. Hookham, Longdill, every one, does me full justice; bears testimony to the upright spirit and liberality of my conduct to her. There is but one voice in condemnation of the detestable Westbrooks. If they should dare to bring it before Chancery, a scene of such fearful horror would be unfolded as would cover them with scorn and shame.[51]

[51] Cf. *St. Irvyne*, ch. x: "It would unfold a tale of too much horror to trace, in review, the circumstances as then they occurred." *Prose Works*, i. 275; and letter to Byron, January 17, 1817: "The circumstances which attended this event are of a nature of such awful and appalling horror, that I hardly dare advert to them in thought."

"I am well in health though somewhat faint and agitated; but the affectionate attentions shown me by Hunt have been sustainers and restoratives more than I can tell.

"Remember my poor babes, Ianthe and Charles. How tender and dear a mother they will find in you—darling William, too! My eyes overflow with tears." [52]

It will be seen that Shelley in this charges the Westbrooks with the sole responsibility for Harriet's terrible end. Of course the charge was not sustained in any way later in the Chancery Suit, when if ever, and in his own interest Shelley ought to have sustained it. "In this letter," says Mr. Clutton-Brock, "Shelley is like a man feebly raising his arms to protect his head from the blow of a giant adversary." [53]

Harriet's husband did not recognize the alloy in his own nature. Whatever evil there was in the world, he believed, grew out of the blight of government and church and law. He could not perceive that these organisms of society, with all of their good and evil, were but reflections of the mixed warp and woof that are the hearts and minds of the persons who create these institutions. Viewing his own character as he viewed these things, in a severely simple and elemental way, he perceived only the gold strands in the pattern. The black threads were for him non-existent.

But if the letter is destitute of the emotions of love or regret, his poems of 1816–17 are not; and the themes of death and accusing memory are recurrent in his work in verse in this period. There are, for example, the lines:

> The moon made thy lips pale, beloved—
> The wind made thy bosom chill—
> The night did shed on thy dear head

[52] Letter to Mary from London, Dec. 16, 1816. *Letters*, ii. 532–4.
[53] *Shelley, the Man and the Poet*, 1910. p. 127.

Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.[54]

There are also the *Lines* assigned by Mary to "November 5, 1817" which clearly reflect the awful experience through which he had passed.

That time is dead for ever, child!
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!
We look on the past
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou [55] and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.[56]

And among the poems of 1818 we find a later echo of the event:

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.[57]

The letter to Mary, quoted above, furnishes the first hint of a motive for an event which followed swiftly after Harriet's suicide. Shelley had told Longdill that it was his in-

[54] *Lines*, first published in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823, where they are dated "November 1815." Mr Hutchinson believes that this date is an error, and that the poem refers to the death of Harriet. Oxford Edition, *Poetical Works of Shelley*, 1904. p. 1004.

[55] Is he addressing Mary?

[56] *Lines*, 1–7.

[57] *The Past*, 6–12. Walter Bagehot cites *Autumn: a Dirge* and *Ginevra*, 206–19, as poems which "allude to the death" of Harriet. *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen*, 1858, p. 304.

From an 18th century print

View of St. MILDRED'S *Church*
Bread Street.

Where Shelley married Mary in 1816.

tention, now that he was free to do so, to marry Mary; and his assurance on this point had given his attorney some hope of securing to Shelley the custody of his children, Ianthe and Charles Bysshe. The author of *Political Justice*, in which marriage is condemned, and his wife were particularly eager that there should be no delay on the part of Shelley and Mary, but that they must post with all speed to the hated altar. "Godwin," wrote Shelley to Claire, December 30, "throughout has shown the most polished and courteous attentions to me and Mary. He seems to think no kindness too great in compensation for what has passed." Shelley saw through his purpose. "I confess I am not entirely deceived by this," he told Claire. But Mrs. Godwin appeared to him "in her real attributes of affection, prejudice, and heartless pride." Toward her he could "never feel an emotion of anything but antipathy." [58]

The ceremony, "so magical in its effects" [59] as Shelley sardonically remarked to Claire as he thought of Godwin, the weather-vane, occurred at St. Mildred's Church, Bread Street. Immediately after its conclusion, Godwin sent William Taylor, of Norwich, an account [60] of the matter which in its *suppressio veri* is a masterpiece of hypocrisy and misinformation. The same strain is followed in a letter to his brother, Hull

[58] *Letters* ii. 536.

[59] Shelley treated the ceremony as a necessary formality; nothing more. Cf. his letter to Byron, January 17, 1817, in which he says his marriage with Mary was "a change . . . which had principally her feelings in respect to Godwin for its object." He hastened to assure Lord Byron that the ceremony was "simply with himself and Mary a measure of convenience, and that their opinions as to the importance of this pretended sanction, and all the prejudices connected with it, remained the same." *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 53.

[60] Privately printed by H. B. Forman, 1911, under the title: *The Elopement of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, as Narrated by William Godwin.*

Godwin, February 21, 1817, in which, his head now held high, Godwin, speaking of Mary, says:

I went to church with this tall girl some time ago to be married. Her husband is the oldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, of Field Place in the county of Sussex, Baronet. So that, according to the vulgar ideas of the world, she is well married, and I have great hopes the young man will make her a good husband. You will wonder, I dare say, how a girl without a penny of fortune should meet with so good a match. But such are the ups and downs of this world. For my part I care but little, comparatively, about wealth, so that it should be her destiny in life to be respectable, virtuous, and contented.[61]

When Harriet Shelley died, her children, Ianthe and Charles Bysshe, were under the care of the Rev. John Kendall, Master of the Earl of Leicester's Hospital at Warwick. On January 2, 1817, John Westbrook, father of Harriet, executed a settlement of £2000 four pounds per cent. in favour of the children.[62] Six days after, the children, through John Westbrook, filed a bill in Chancery requesting the appointment, by the court, of John Westbrook and Eliza Westbrook, or some other fit persons, to act as guardians; and that their father, Percy Bysshe Shelley, should be restrained from taking possession of them.

The children's petition alleged that after the birth of Ianthe, their father had become acquainted with "a Mr. Godwin the author of a work called *Political Justice* and other Works and with Mary Godwin his daughter and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley about three years" before had "deserted his said wife and unlawfully cohabited with the said Mary Godwin. And that thereupon the said Harriet Shelley returned to the house of her . . . father John Westbrook" under whose

[61] Kegan Paul, *William Godwin*. ii. 246.

[62] This was done to bring the children under the protection of the court.

roof Charles Bysshe Shelley was thereafter born; and that Harriet and the children continued to live there "until a short time previously to the time of her death"; and that Shelley had continued to live in illegal union with Mary and that "several" children had been born to them. They declared that when Sir Timothy Shelley in 1815 arranged to provide for his son £1000 *per annum* as "a yearly rent charge" on certain Shelley estates, he, Sir Timothy, had provided also that £200 of this sum should be devoted to Harriet Shelley;[63] but that since Shelley left his wife she and the children had been supported partly by Harriet and partly by John Westbrook. The petition also attacked Shelley's fitness to act as guardian on the grounds of his beliefs as follows: "the said Percy Bysshe Shelley avows himself to be an Atheist and . . . since his said Marriage he has written and published a certain work called *Queen Mab* with notes and other works and that he has therein blasphemously derided the truth of the Christian Revelation and denied the existence of God as the Creator of the Universe." The children requested that they should be placed under the protection of the court.[64]

In support of this petition there was filed on the 10th day of January an affidavit sworn to by Eliza Westbrook, so important for its bearing on the separation from Harriet, that it is really necessary to reproduce it in full:

AFFIDAVIT OF ELIZABETH WESTBROOKE SWORN 10 JANUARY 1817.

States That she knows and is well acquainted with the Handwriting

[63] This was an error. The arrangement for the payment of this sum to Harriet was made by the poet himself, through his father, as soon as the negotiations with the latter insured him the payment of the £1000 income.

[64] Excerpts from Forman's text of the original petition, published in his edition of Medwin's *Revised Life of Shelley*, 1913. Appendix. pp. 463–8.

of Percy Bysshe Shelley Esq. one of the above named defendants in this cause having frequently seen him write That she hath looked upon certain paper Writings now produced and shewn to her at the time of swearing this her Affidavit and marked respectively 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. That the said Paper Writings are all of the Handwriting of the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley and were respectively addressed by him to Harriet his late Wife deceased the sister of this Deponent That the Female mentioned or referred to in the said Letters marked respectively 2. 4. 6. 9. under the name or designation of "Mary" and in the said other Letters by the Character or description of the Person with whom the said Defendant had connected or associated himself is Mary Godwin in the Pleadings of this Cause named whom the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley in the Lifetime of his said Wife and in or about the middle of the year 1814 took to cohabit with him and hath ever since continued to cohabit and still doth cohabit with; That she hath looked upon a certain other paper Writing produced and shewn to this Deponent now at the time of swearing this her Affidavit and marked 10 That the same Paper Writing is of the Handwriting of the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley That the Person referred to in the said last mentioned Letter As "the Lady whose Union with the said Defendant this Deponent might excusably regard as the cause of her Sister's ruin" is also the said Mary Godwin That she hath looked upon a certain printed Book produced and shewn to this Deponent now at the time of swearing this her Affidavit and marked with the Letter A and entitled *Queen Mab* with notes subjoined thereto and a certain other printed book or Pamphlet marked with the Letter B entitled a *Letter to Lord Ellenborough Occasioned by the Sentence Which he Passed on Mr. D. I. Eaton as Publisher of the 3rd Part of Paine's Age of Reason* That the said Books marked respectively A B were respectively written and published by the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley as she this Deponent knows she having frequently seen the manuscript and having repeatedly seen him engaged in writing the same That the said Printed Books now produced were presented by the said Defendant to his said late

Wife the Sister of this Deponent That she hath since the death of her said Sister received several applications from the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley and from Mr. Leigh Hunt on his behalf demanding the said Petitioners to be delivered up to the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley.[65]

Shelley's answer to the plaintiffs, filed on the 18th of January, alleged "that after the birth of . . . Eliza Ianthe Shelley this Defendant and his . . . late wife agreed in consequence of certain differences between them to live separate and apart from each other but this Defendant denies that he deserted his said wife otherwise than by separating from her as aforesaid. . . . And this Defendant says that at the urgent entreaty of his . . . late wife he permitted his . . . children to reside with her under her management and protection after her separation from this Defendant although this Defendant saith he was very anxious from his affection for his . . . children to have them with him under his own care and management during his . . . Wife's life, but that he forebore so to do in compliance with the wishes of his wife and on account of their tender age intending nevertheless to have them under his own care and to provide for their education himself as soon as they should be of proper age or in case of the death of his said wife and never having in any way abandoned or deserted them or had any intention of so doing"; explained that if the children had been under the protection of the Westbrooks it had been contrary to his own desire; and protested against their having been "clandestinely placed in some place unknown to this Defendant." [66] Shelley denied that he was "unlawfully

[65] Medwin's *Revised Life of Shelley*. ed. H. B. Forman. Appendix. pp. 468–9. Text is that of Wetherell's Brief.

[66] Evidently a reference to the removal of the children to the care of the Rev. John Kendall of Warwick.

cohabiting with Mary Godwin"; and stated that since Harriet's death he had married Mary. He also denied that Sir Timothy had made the arrangement, in 1815, for the payment of £200 per annum to Harriet. He explained that the arrangement of 1815 followed his own failure to live within £200 annual allowance from his father prior to that date; that this failure had resulted in amassing debts totalling £5000; that Sir Timothy had in 1815 "advanced . . . a considerable sum of money towards the payment" of these debts, and secured to Shelley the payment of an annuity of £1000 "during the joint lives of the said Sir Timothy Shelley and this Defendant"; that the Defendant had provided that £200 per annum from this annuity should be paid to Harriet, and that she had been furnished at the same time with an additional sum of £200 for the payment of her debts incurred up to that time; and that the annuity had been paid regularly up to the death of Harriet. Finally Shelley pleaded that he was "exclusively entitled to the custody and care of his . . . children and that he ought not to be deprived thereof or have his just rights as their Father and natural Guardian taken from him or abridged and that the said Complainants ought to be delivered up to him." [67]

The Lord Chancellor, in a formal order dated Thursday, 27 March 1817, directed that Shelley be restrained from taking the custody of the children and instructed William Alexander, Esq., one of the Masters of the Court, to "enquire what will be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the . . . Plaintiffs." [68] Alexander on August 1, 1817, reported that Shelley had proposed Longdill, his solicitor, as a fit guardian for the children; and that the Westbrooks had proposed the

[67] Medwin's *Revised Life of Shelley*, ed. Forman. Appendix. pp. 470–3.
[68] *Ibid.* 477.

Rev. John Kendall, already referred to. He approved the nomination made by the Westbrooks, for the appointment of Kendall as guardian. The objection to Longdill had been that he was Shelley's solicitor.

Shelley accordingly petitioned the court for a reconsideration of the appointment; and new proposals were made by both parties to the controversy. The Westbrooks named the Reverend Jacob Cheeseborough, of Ulcomb, Kent; Shelley, Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Hume, of Brent End Lodge, Hanwell, Middlesex. On April 18, 1818, Shelley's nomination was confirmed by Mr. Alexander; and despite a petition which followed from the Westbrooks, asking a review of the appointment, the Chancellor upheld Mr. Alexander in the confirmation of Dr. and Mrs. Hume as proper guardians for the children. The Lord Chancellor by the same order directed Shelley to pay £120 annually to these guardians. The disappointed father would be permitted to visit his children once a month; [69] but then only in the presence of Dr. and Mrs. Hume.[70]

We know, from a paper which Shelley prepared during February to be submitted to the court that he protested against the separation of a man from his children because that man's opinion did not coincide with those of the majority in the state; but in explication of his own position on the subject of marriage stated that though he did not agree with the majority in this, he had, in practice (by marrying Mary after the death of Harriet) actually conformed to the sentiment of that majority, and that he could not, therefore, be deprived of the care of his children for this cause.[71]

[69] Or, to meet the contingency of Shelley's travelling abroad, as often as twelve times a year.

[70] Medwin's *Revised Life of Shelley*, 480–6.

[71] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 86–8.

The Lord Chancellor, on the other hand, made it clear when giving his decision on March 27, 1817, that it was only because Shelley had carried his theories of lawless love into practice that he was deemed an individual to whom it would be unwise to entrust the education of children. He said in part: "I consider this . . . as a case in which a father has demonstrated that he must and does deem it to be a matter of duty which his principles impose upon him, to recommend, to those whose opinions and habits he may take upon himself to form, that conduct, in some of the most important relations in life, as moral and virtuous which the law calls upon me to consider as immoral and vicious . . . conduct which the law animadverts upon as inconsistent with the duties of persons in such relations of life, and which it considers as injuriously affecting both the interests of such persons and those of the community." [72]

While this dispute over the guardianship of the Shelley children was going on, the cares of Shelley and Mary were increased by the birth at Bath on the 12th of January, of the daughter of Lord Byron and Claire Clairmont. Byron was fully aware that a child was to be born to Claire, and made a disgraceful reference to it in a postscript to a letter to Augusta Leigh, December 18, 1816; [73] but by his own statement did not learn of the birth until he was at Rome [74] (April 29–May 26, 1817).[75] This is singular; for on January 13 Mary Shelley notified Byron: "I take upon myself the task and

[72] Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. ii. 90. It is evident from Shelley's letters to Mary, Jan. 11; to Byron on Jan. 17; and to Claire, Jan. 30, that he feared a criminal information based on his authorship of *Queen Mab* might be the sequel. Cf. *Letters* ii. 537, 540, and *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 30. But no such prosecution was instituted. Cf. *Lord Byron's Correspondence*. ii. 52.

[73] Lovelace, *Astarte*, 1921. p. 280.

[74] Letter to Augusta Leigh, May 27, 1817. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. Prothero. iv. 123–4.

[75] Mayne, *Byron*. ii. 105–6.

pleasure of informing you that Claire was safely delivered of a little girl yesterday morning (Sunday, January 12) at 4." [76] And on the 17th Shelley wrote him as follows " . . . I have good news to tell you. Claire is safely delivered of a most beautiful girl. Both mother and child are well, and Mary describes the latter to be a creature of the most exquisite symmetry, and as betraying, even at its birth, a vigour and a sensibility very unusual." [77] The tone of this letter, thinks Mrs. Julian Marshall, would indicate that Shelley "quite simply assumes the event to be an occasion of great rejoicing to all concerned, and expects Byron to feel the same." [78] In April he further described Byron's daughter as "very beautiful, and though her frame is of somewhat a delicate texture," as being in "excellent health." He waxed enthusiastic in completing the portrait, saying, "Her eyes are the most intelligent I ever saw in so young an infant. Her hair is black, her eyes deeply blue, and her mouth exquisitely shaped." [79]

But other poets now entered Shelley's circle of acquaintances.

If Horace Smith's account is correct, Shelley's meeting with himself and Keats must have been an event of those days in December 1816, when Shelley was a guest of Leigh Hunt at the editor's home in the Vale of Health, Hampstead. Smith had gone out to Hunt's, where he found Keats; but Shelley had not arrived. "In a short time," however, says Smith, "Shelley was announced, and I beheld a fair, freckled, blue-eyed, light-haired, delicate-looking person, whose countenance was serious and thoughtful; whose stature would have been

[76] *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 31.
[77] *Ibid* ii. 29–30.
[78] Marshall, *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,* i. 179.
[79] Letter of Shelley to Byron, from Albion House, Great Marlow, April 23, 1817. *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* ed. Murray. 1922. ii. 52–3.

rather tall had he carried himself upright, whose earnest voice, though never loud, was somewhat unmusical. Manifest as it was that his preoccupied mind had no thought to spare for the modish adjustment of his fashionably-made clothes, it was impossible to doubt, even for a moment, that you were gazing upon a *gentleman;* a first impression which subsequent observation never failed to confirm, even in the most exalted acceptation of the term, as indicating one that is gentle, generous, accomplished, brave."[80] The joint author of the *Rejected Addresses* and the poet who had published *Alastor* became friends from the moment and remained such until Shelley's death.

"Keats," says Leigh Hunt, referring to this evening, "did not take to Shelley as kindly as Shelley did to him."[81] As a partial explanation of Keats's coolness Hunt adds: "Keats, being a little too sensitive on the score of his origin, felt inclined to see in every man of birth a sort of natural enemy."[82] Keats probably knew that Hunt was accepting financial aid from Shelley; was almost certainly aware that Godwin was one of Shelley's dependents; and not desiring to join these pensioners he stood aloof from Shelley, who esteemed his genius, in a way which may have led Shelley into the error of thinking that he was a young man of means.[83] It is possible, too, that Shelley's ardour in proselyting his friends and acquaintances to his metaphysical and political opinions may have turned Keats against him. Though Keats was not, as some have supposed, utterly insensible to the politics and social

[80] Arthur H. Beavan, *James and Horace Smith,* 1899. p. 137.

[81] *Autobiography,* ed. 1860. p. 266.

[82] *Ibid.* 267.

[83] cf. Shelley's letter to Leigh Hunt, from Marlow, August 3, 1817. *Letters,* ii. 549.

From a contemporary print

HAMPSTEAD

Where Leigh Hunt lived, and where Keats met Shelley.

movements of his own day, he was never fired with that passion for reforming the world which so animated Shelley that beauty and love and truth were all at one time or another confused and interblended with it.

But what is a far more likely cause of Keats's withdrawal from Shelley is that he was aware of Shelley's potent influence upon his own imagination and style in poetry. To Benjamin Bailey Keats wrote, later, explaining why he had declined an invitation to visit Shelley at Marlow, that he desired "to keep his own unfettered scope." Proof of the extent to which Shelley could and did dominate Keats's style is readily found —though Amy Lowell, curiously, overlooked it—in a comparison of *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816) with Keats's *Endymion* (1818). Endymion's earth-journey is clearly modelled on the journey of the poet, in *Alastor*. Verbal reminiscences, as well, are unusually numerous; and Keats's debt in the aggregate is seen to have been much greater to Shelley than to Diodorus Siculus, to whom Miss Lowell in her recent biography of Keats has devoted generous space, while according no room to the other.

Mary, who had been living at Bath, with Claire, gave up her quarters in that city on the 26th of January and forthwith joined Shelley in London for a month's visit with the Hunts at Hampstead. At the end of February the Shelleys, whom Claire rejoined, moved into Albion House, Great Marlow, which had been secured for them by Peacock. The house, now somewhat altered, stands in the principal street of the village, a good distance from the river. It is a fine, rambling old place, but suffering from lack of sunlight (a broad cedar on a mound at the rear cuts this off) and it is exceedingly damp. Not realizing this, however, Shelley had engaged the house,

from December 21, 1816, on a lease of more than twenty years, at an annual rate of £63.[84]

During his residence at Marlow Shelley came into close contact with some of that widespread misery among the working classes which was the immediate consequence of the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the sudden cessation of Continental orders for English goods, the rapid increase, stimulated by these wars, of the number and variety of machines in industry, which necessarily displaced many workers; and the concomitants of which were an inflated currency, an enormous national debt provoking high taxes, and a corrupt and inefficient Parliament. Always and primarily a humanitarian, Shelley plunged at once into the arena of suffering, ministered personally to the sick and needy of his own village and district, and set to work to rectify the wrongs of his fellow-citizens by writing (February–March 1817) a pamphlet on the subject; *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote Throughout the Kingdom*,[85] which he published (during the week of February 22–29) [86] over the signature, "The Hermit of Marlow."

This little tract of thirteen pages suggested that in the light of so much clamor for and against reform as was then audible in England it would be advisable to call a meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern,[87] London, "to take into consideration—

[84] Shelley's check to "Mr. Tylecote or order" Jan. 14, 1818, was for "£63 for one year rent of Albion House." (*Brookes-Shelley Correspondence.*)

[85] Compare, with Shelley's pamphlet, another, entitled: "The State of the Representation of England and Wales, printed, by order of the Society, The Friends of the People." London, 1793, 4to-; and "Resolutions of the Society Associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform," London, 1792, 4to.

[86] On February 22nd Shelley returned the revised proofs of the pamphlet to Ollier; and on Sunday, the 29th, Hunt commented on the pamphlet in an editorial in *The Examiner*.

[87] A popular resort of the liberals at the time.

From a contemporary print

GREAT MARLOW
Where Shelley lived in 1816–18.

measures for ascertaining whether—a Reform in Parliament is the will of the majority of the individuals of the British Nation." [88] At this meeting there should be no discussion of questions likely to disunite the assembly, but only a consideration of a sort of fundamental platform upon which agreement could probably be reached. He then proposed such a platform calling for a systematic canvass of the public opinion of Great Britain and Ireland on the resolution: "That the House of Commons does not represent the will of the People of the British Nation"; and "that it is our duty, if we shall be found in the minority in this great question, incessantly to petition; if among the majority, to require and exact that that House should originate such measures of Reform as would render its Members actual Representatives of the Nation." [89] The meeting, while declaring its abhorrence of violence and dissension, should continue from day to day until all the details of a plan for this canvass had been worked out, and a subscription for the defraying of the expenses involved in the canvass had been started. To this last Shelley pledged £100, a sum which, he said, represented a tenth of his income.

Shelley might have seen the statement, in Cobbett's *Political Register* for January 20th, 1817: "MAGNA CHARTA says, that *no man shall be taxed without his own consent*, and that *Parliaments shall be annual*." [90] At least, he endorsed both ideas in his pamphlet, referring those who sought reasons for the first, to the writings of Cobbett, and justifying his moderation in the second thus:

With respect to Universal Suffrage, I confess I consider its adoption, in the present unprepared state of public knowledge and feeling,

[88] *Prose Works*, 1880. ii. 89.
[89] *Ibid.* ii. 91–2.
[90] Reprinted in *Selections from Cobbett's Political Works*. ed. Cobbett.

a measure fraught with peril.—The consequences of the immediate extension of the elective franchise to every male adult, would be to place power in the hands of men who have been rendered brutal and torpid by ages of slavery. It is to suppose that the qualities belonging to a demagogue are such as are sufficient to endow a legislator.—Nothing can less consist with reason, or afford smaller hopes of any beneficial issue, than the plan which should abolish the regal and aristocratical branches of our constitution, before the public mind, through many gradations of improvement, shall have arrived at the maturity which can disregard these symbols of its childhood.[91]

Writing to Charles Ollier, publisher of the pamphlet, in late February or early March, Shelley directed that copies of the *Proposal* should be sent to a number of men famous at the time for their advocacy of reform. In his list appear the names of Sir Francis Burdett, Henry Brougham, William Cobbett, John Philpot Curran, Major Cartwright, Francis Place, and the Honorable Douglas Kinnaird. Burdett, it will be remembered, had been honored by Shelley in his Dedication of *The Wandering Jew* (1811); Curran had crossed his path in Ireland; Francis Place, reform politician, had befriended Godwin; Kinnaird had been associated with Byron in the Sub-Committee of Management of Drury Lane Theatre, and was now active in prosecuting the campaign for reforms, especially as these affected the people of Scotland.[92] Cobbett and Cartwright had grown gray in battling for annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and alteration in the scheme of representation in Parliament.

Mr. H. Buxton Forman has given good reasons for believ-

[91] *Prose Works*, ii. 95–6.

[92] Cf. *Examiner*, no. 479, Sunday, March 2, 1817, p. 142 for account of Kinnaird's speech at a gathering of reformers at the Freemason's Tavern.

ing that the list of names, and the notions put forward in Shelley's *Proposal*, may have been suggested by reading Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* during the early months of 1817.[93] A concurrent examination of Cobbett's *Political Register* for the same period, with the addition perhaps also of the file for the latter months of 1816 yields material of no less value on the background against which this little treatise was composed.[94] The *Proposal* excited no widespread attention and there is but one known review involving it—that from the pen of Southey in the *Quarterly* for January 1817, published in April. Even here it only furnished Southey with an additional title for the list at the head of his article; for in the review itself he does not specifically mention Shelley's pamphlet.

But if this publication made no great stir either among the friends or foes of reform, Shelley's large benevolence exhibited among the poor lace-makers of Marlow must have made more than a passing impression. "The poorest cottagers," wrote Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, "knew and benefited by his thoroughly practical and unselfish nature during his residence at Marlow, when he would visit them, and having gone through a course of medical study in order that he might assist them with advice, would commonly administer the tonic, which such systems usually require, of a good basin of broth or pea-soup. And I believe that I am infringing on no private domestic delicacy when repeating that he has been known upon an immediate urgency to purloin—'Convey the wise it call'—a portion of the warmest of Mrs. Shelley's wardrobe to protect some poor starving sister."[95]

[93] Introduction to Shelley Society facsimile of Shelley's MS. of the *Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote.* 1887. pp. 13–24.

[94] Cf. *Selections from Cobbett's Political Works,* vol. v. pp. 1–203.

[95] *Recollections of Writers,* 1878. p. 151.

I found Adrian's [i. e. Shelley's] ante-chamber crowded [it is Mary Shelley speaking] it was his hour for giving audience. I was unwilling to disturb his labours, and waited, watching the ingress and egress of the petitioners. They consisted of people of the middling and lower classes of society, whose means of subsistence failed with the cessation of trade, and of the busy spirit of money-making in all its branches, peculiar to our country. There was an air of anxiety, sometimes of terror in the new-comers, strongly contrasted with the resigned and ever-satisfied mien of those who had had audience. I could read the influence of my friend in their quickened motions and cheerful faces.[96]

Whether, in the passage next quoted, Mary had herself, or her assistant, Mrs. Madocks,[97] in mind, it is difficult to say; but since in either case it illustrates the charity of the Shelleys I make no apology for quoting in full:

In the village of Little Marlow an old woman ruled the community. —Old Martha was seated more firmly than ever on the regal seat, elevated by reverence and love. She entered the cottages of the sick; she relieved their wants with her own hand; she betrayed no fear, and inspired all who saw her with some portion of her own native courage. She attended the markets—she insisted upon being supplied with food for those who were too poor to purchase it. She showed them how the well-being of each included the prosperity of all. She would not permit the gardens to be neglected, nor the very flowers in the cottage lattices to droop from want of care. Hope, she said, was better than a doctor's prescription, and every thing that could sustain and enliven the spirits, of more worth than drugs and mixtures.[98]

When in May 1818, and again in April 1819, the *Quarterly* had directed a Parthian volley of vitriol in Shelley's direction, accusing him of atheism and dissolute private life,

[96] *The Last Man*, 1826. ii. 188.
[97] Cf. Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ii. 121.
[98] *The Last Man*, ii. 233–4.

Hunt sprang to his friend's defense in a series of articles which stressed the simplicity and purity of Shelley's life at Marlow. Said Hunt:

The Reviewer asserts that he [i. e., Shelley] "is shamefully dissolute in his conduct." We heard of similar assertions when we resided in the same house with Mr. Shelley for nearly three months; [99] and how was he living all that time? As much like Plato himself, as any of his theories resemble Plato,—or rather still more like a Pythagorean. This was the round of his daily life:—He was up early; breakfasted sparingly; wrote . . . all the morning; went out in his boat or into the woods with some Greek author [100] or the Bible [101] in his hands; came home to a dinner of vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine); visited (if necessary) "the sick and the fatherless," whom others gave Bibles to and no help; wrote or studied again, or read to his wife and friends the whole evening; took a crust of bread or a glass of whey for his supper; and went early to bed. This is literally the whole of the life he led.[102]

In the meantime Mary was busily engaged on her romance of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus;* which, when completed in May,[103] was provided with a preface and offered to John Murray who would not undertake to publish it; and it was pressed upon Charles Ollier at the beginning of August; but he also declined to issue the book. Ollier's refusal put Shelley in bad spirits,[104] and he appealed to Mrs. Hunt: "Does any kind friend of yours, Marianne, know any book-

[99] March-May 1817, at Albion House, Great Marlow.

[100] Cf. Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron,* pp. 71, 94, and Shelley's letter to Peacock, July 25, 1818. Letters, ii. 606.

[101] "We will undertake to say that Mr. Shelley knows more about the Bible, than all the priests who have anything to do with the *Quarterly Review* or its writers." Hunt, in *Examiner* No. 614, Sun. Oct. 3, 1819. p. 636.

[102] *Examiner* No. 615, Sunday, October 10, 1819, p. 653.

[103] The last page of the MS. was corrected on May 14th.

[104] Cf. Shelley's postscript to Mary's letter to Marianne Hunt, Aug. 16, 1817. *Letters* ii. 553.

seller—? Any of those good tempered Robinsons?"[105] Late in the same month Shelley wrote, offering the MS. to Lackingtons. The novel was accepted, and published some time in April or May[106] of the following year. Shelley wrote Peacock in July to the effect that the book "seem[ed] to have been well received";[107] but in a letter of the same date to Godwin he deplored the appearance of an unfavorable review in the *Quarterly*.

During 1817 the Shelleys had many guests at Marlow; Godwin, the Hunts, Hogg, William Baxter of Dundee, and Horace Smith being among these; and of course Peacock, who lived nearby, was a frequent caller. Sometimes Peacock and Shelley would walk to London "by a very pleasant route over fields, lanes, woods, and heaths to Uxbridge, and by the main road from Uxbridge to London," a distance of thirty-two miles to Tyburn turnpike. They took these walks leisurely. "I never saw Shelley tired with these walks," said Peacock. "Delicate and fragile as he appeared, he had great muscular strength. We took many walks in all directions from Marlow, and saw everything worth seeing within a radius of sixteen miles. This comprehended, among other notable places, Windsor Castle and Forest, Virginia Water, and the spots which were consecrated by the memories of Cromwell, Hampden, and Milton, in the Chiltern district of Buckinghamshire."[108]

[105] It will be remembered that G. & J. Robinson, Paternoster Row, had in 1810 sponsored the appearance of *Zastrozzi: a Romance*.

[106] It had been reviewed in *Blackwood's* and *Constable's Edinburgh Magazine* before May 30; and in the *Quarterly* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* before June 14. The dates are established by references to the reviews in letters from Peacock to Shelley, May 30 and June 14, 1818. *Thomas Love Peacock, Letters to Edward Hookham and Percy B. Shelley*. 1910. pp. 63 ff.

[107] Letter to Peacock, July 25, 1818. *Letters* ii. 607.

[108] *Works of Thomas Love Peacock* iii. 428.

From a contemporary aquatint

Publishers of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Peacock also reports their enjoyment of rowing and sailing on the Thames, between Henley and Maidenhead. "He was always on the water," a woman of Marlow told William Howitt, many years later; "always boating, boating,—never easy but when he was in that boat. Do you know what a trick was played him by some way?" On Howitt's disclaiming any knowledge of the trick, she went on: "He called his boat 'Vaga,' and one morning he found the name lengthened by a piece of chalk, with the word 'bond'—*Vagabond.* Another witness, nearly ninety years old, "an ancient surgeon who had attended almost everybody [in Marlow] for the last half-century," also remembered Shelley. "He was a very unsocial man, he said; kept no company but Mr. Peacock's, and that of his boat, and was never seen in the house but he had a book in his hand, and was reading as he went along." [109]

An unpublished fragment of a letter which I have reason to believe that Shelley addressed to Hogg early in 1817 well exhibits his good humor and hearty hospitality.

I wish you could contrive to make your visit here early. Hunt is with me at present, and will remain at least three weeks. May Peacock expect you during that period?

My τετρ 'απους has been metamorphosed since you were here into a featherless biped; he lives, and inhabits his father's house, but has ceased to creep. He walks with great alacrity.

Very sincerely yours
P. B. Shelley.[110]

A Mr. Madocks, of Marlow, confided to Charles Middleton [111] that Shelley had been wont to "stay with him by the

[109] *Homes and Haunts of the Most Eminent British Poets,* 2nd Ed., 1847. p. 455.

[110] Spencer MSS.

[111] Author of *Shelley and His Writings,* 2 vols., 1858. When Shelley left Marlow in 1818 many of his MSS left behind him fell into the hands of this

hour, talking, in his wild, earnest way, on all kinds of topics: on the condition of the poor, and the best means of ameliorating it; on politics, on poetry, on the sublimities of the inspired writings, on the divinity of love, on the nature of the Deity, on the structure of the Universe, on the glory and grandeur of the Creation, and with such rapidity, that, together with his abrupt entrance and sudden departure, and the strange unearthliness that distinguished him, gave to his visits something of the appearance of the coming and going of a spirit." [112]

Among the Brookes-Shelley correspondence are letters and cheques of this period of Shelley's life, which give us some idea of the extent to which Shelley was, as Trelawny once put it, the "purse" of his friends. Thus between October 1, 1817, and March 12, 1818, there are records of the payment by Shelley to Godwin of sums aggregating £346 10s. 10d., and between January 31 and March 12, 1818, to Peacock, £55, some part of which may have been in settlement of bills contracted by Peacock for Shelley. At various times between December 23, 1815, and January 30, 1818, but chiefly during the opening months of 1816, he gave Charles Clairmont, the mendicant brother of Claire drafts totalling £106 6s. An order made out to "Mrs. Clairmont," March 26, 1817,[113] for

Madocks, who held them as security for the payment of some obligations owing by Shelley to him. Some of these MSS. were afterwards sold. Middleton printed a fragment which was still (1858) in Madocks' hands, of Shelley's translation of Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-Politicus. Cf. *Shelley and His Writings*, i. 188–90.

[112] C. S. Middleton, *Shelley and His Writings*, ii. 98–9. Cf. Trelawny, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, p. 22: "Mrs. Williams said, 'Who? Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where.'"

[113] The check is dated "1816" but Shelley should have written "1817." Cf. Dowden, *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* ii. 45, note, for another instance in which Shelley uses the designation "Mrs. Clairmont" in addressing Claire.

£6 reminds us of the effort made by the Shelleys and by Claire herself to keep her from suffering the censure of friends or acquaintances for her love affair with Byron which had terminated in the birth of a child. Leigh Hunt was also a sharer of his bounty. As in the case of Shelley's advances to Godwin, the Brookes-Shelley papers reveal only a fraction of Shelley's gifts to Hunt; but even these few show that the sometime editor of the *Examiner* received, during the six months, January–June 1822, no less than £437.

If his own funds gave out, he would endeavor to borrow of others in order to lend to a needy friend. Samuel Rogers, the "banker-poet," remembered that his first and only meeting with Shelley in England was when the latter called upon him at his house in St. James's Place, requesting the loan, upon his own bond, of money to Leigh Hunt. But alleging "numerous claims" upon his bounty at that time, Rogers said he had been "obliged to refuse the loan." [114] From a lately published letter of Shelley's to Byron, July 9, 1817, we are able to assign this interview to a day not long before the date of this letter. The letter begins: "I called on Rogers the other day, on some affairs relating to Hunt, and heard some news of you, viz., that you had been to Rome, and that you had returned to Venice." [115] Rogers' own chronology must have been confused immediately after the reference quoted above, for he stated in succeeding sentences: "That same day, after dinner, I walked in the garden with Byron." Byron at that time (June–July 1817) was at or near Venice.

The author of *The Pleasures of Memory* might be circumspect enough not to overload his craft with derelict editors and philosophers and poets, but Shelley was not so careful.

[114] *Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.* 1856. p. 236.
[115] *Lord Byron's Correspondence.* ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 57.

The result was that on October 20, the poet was put under arrest at the instance of his uncle, Captain John Pilford, and another creditor to whom he was in debt in unknown sums; and his total outstanding obligations at the time were stated by Whitton, Sir Timothy's attorney, to be "about £1500." [116] Two days' detention Shelley had found "most annoying," when he was visited by Whitton and Longdill, who came to confer with him respecting ways and means of settling these obligations. Shelley, in the hope that his father would come to his relief, had delayed the sale of his reversion on a farm in Shipley which "a Mr. Gordon of Brighton" had offered to buy, "some weeks" before, for £3000. The present situation demanded immediate action. What means were taken to free Shelley is not known, but by the 28th he was again at Marlow.[117]

> Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind
> Than calm in waters, seen [118]

—lines of 1822, might well be applied to the conflicting currents of life and thought and action which tossed Shelley like a cork on a storm-swept sea, during the latter part of 1816 and the first half of 1817. While he was recovering from the shock of the deaths of Fanny and Harriet, and the agonies of the hearings in Chancery, he found himself face to face with a most trying situation in his own home; a situation in-

[116] Ingpen, *Shelley in England*, p. 525.

[117] The dates connected with the arrest (or arrests?) are uncertain. The one which I have adopted is from Whitton's minute-book. But there is a letter from Mary to Shelley, dated October 16, in which she refers to "the late arrest" with some anxiety—which would indicate that the arrest, or an arrest (for there may, I think, have been two) had taken place before that date. Cf. *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 205, for Mary's letter on this subject.

[118] *To Jane, the Recollection.* 87–8.

volving the peace of mind also of Mary and Claire and Byron. What was to be done with Byron's child, "Alba," or, as she was later christened, "Allegra"? How could Claire be shielded from public ignominy? How could Shelley himself be guarded against suspicion that the child was his own and Claire's? Would Lord Byron return to England to acknowledge and claim his daughter? [119] By September, in which month a daughter, Clara Everina, was born to Shelley and Mary, fears lest the Court of Chancery might rob him of the children of his second union led Shelley to threaten a flight to Italy [120] "as a refuge at once from the stupid tyranny of these laws" and from his "constitutional disease" which about this time returned to torment him with renewed anguish. If he should go to Italy he would himself be "the lion to the little Una"; but if he should remain in England he would arrange to commit Alba "to the charge of some person on whom" he could "entirely depend." [121] There were "two very respectable young ladies" in Great Marlow "who would undertake the charge of her," [122] if Byron would give his consent to the arrangement. But Byron neither came nor sent for Alba, and in the succeeding spring, she accompanied Shelley and Mary to Italy. The cross that Shelley took up in housing and shielding Claire's and Byron's illegitimate child was never to be laid down, from this year until Alba died, five

[119] All these questions are raised by Shelley in his letter to Byron, from Albion House, Great Marlow, April 23, 1817. *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 53.

[120] The earliest reference in Shelley's letters to a plan to go to Italy is that in his letter to Lord Byron, from Marlow, July 9, 1817. *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* ed. Murray, ii. 58, from which some of the phrases next quoted are taken.

[121] Letter to Byron, from 13, Lisson Grove, North, Paddington, Sept. 24, 1817. *Lord Byron's Correspondence,* ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 59.

[122] Letter described in note 116 above.

years later at Bagna Cavallo, twelve miles from Ravenna, in "the Paradise of Exiles, Italy."

Even when most pressed by anxieties and calamities, however, Shelley was not insensible to the beauty of the scene in which they were living at Marlow. "We spend our time here," he informed Byron, "in that tranquil uniformity which presents much to enjoy and leaves nothing to record. I have my books, and a garden with a lawn, enclosed by high hedges, and overshadowed with firs and cypresses intermixed with apple trees now in blossom. We have a boat on the river, in which, when the days are sunny and serene, such as we have had of late, we sail." [123]

[123] Letter to Lord Byron from Albion House, Great Marlow, April 23, 1817. *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, ed. Murray, 1922. ii. 53–4.

END OF VOLUME ONE

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